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BY

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I DEDICATE  
THIS WORK  
TO  
MAJOR-GENERAL SIR F. R. WINGATE,  
K. C. B., K. C. M. G., D. S. O., R. A., A. D. C.  
SIRDAR OF THE EGYPTIAN ARMY AND GOVERNOR-GENERAL  
OF THE SUDAN PROVINCES,  
IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE  
OF  
MUCH FRIENDLY ENCOURAGEMENT AND  
SYMPATHETIC HELP IN EGYPT.



## Preface.

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IN the first volume of my edition of the “Book of Governors” by Thomas of Margâ I gave a brief account of Rabban Hôrmîzd, the founder of the famous monastery at Al-Ḳôsh which bears his name, and which is situated about thirty miles to the North of the city of Môşul, and a series of extracts, with translations, from the life of the saint which was written in Syriac by Simon, the disciple of Mâr Yôzâdhaḳ. Simon’s life of Rabban Hôrmîzd was, at that time, unknown to scholars, and during the years which have followed the publication of the extracts from it many requests have been made to me to publish it in full, with an English translation. The manuscript from which I had edited the extracts was copied for me by the Deacon Îsâ bar-Isha’yâ at Al-Ḳôsh in 1892 from a comparatively modern manuscript which was in the possession of the monks of the Monastery of Rabban Hôrmîzd, and was greatly prized by them. When I was staying at the Monastery in November and December 1890 the

courteous and hospitable monks of that old-world house shewed me their manuscript one night and allowed me to read it through, and I came to the conclusion that the text was unknown in Europe and was worth publishing. I asked the Abbot for permission to have a copy of the manuscript made for me, and it was granted, and the above mentioned deacon undertook the task. Shortly afterwards one of the monks in the Monastery produced another manuscript containing a somewhat lengthy metrical Life of Rabban Hôrmîzd by Mâr Sergius of Âdhôrbâijân, and this also seemed to be unknown in Europe. The composition contains 3496 lines, and is divided into twenty-two “gates” or sections, each of which is named after a letter of the Syriac alphabet; the longest “gate” contains 1098 lines and the shortest 50 lines, and the last letter of the last word of each line ends with the letter after which the “gate” is named. When we consider the length of the text, and the skill with which the consistency of this arrangement has been maintained, no doubt can exist concerning the profound knowledge of Syriac which the writer must have possessed. A great many verbal forms, adverbs etc., are, as was to be expected, artificial, and are not to be found in ancient Syriac texts, but the greater number of them are of interest. An important feature of the manuscript which I saw were the numerous glosses, over five hundred in number, which were written in red

ink on the margins of the pages, and the fact of their existence proved that the composition was some hundreds of years old, and that the Nestorians considered it to be of sufficient value to merit careful explanation and annotation. Permission to have a copy of the manuscript made was given to me by the owner, and when the deacon 'Isâ had finished his copy it was sent to me, together with that of the prose Life of Rabban Hôrmîzd, and reached London in due course.

The manuscript of the prose Life of Rabban Hôrmîzd from which my copy was taken had neither colophon nor date, and it appeared to have been written in the XIXth century; enquiries made, however, elicited the information that the text was derived from a manuscript of the XIIth or XIIIth century which had been in the possession of a native gentleman of great age, but which at his death had disappeared and could not be traced. The manuscript of the metrical Life of Rabban Hôrmîzd from which my copy was taken was declared to have been written in the XVIIth century, and this manuscript was, in turn, said to have been copied from one belonging to an older period; further information on the subject I was unable to obtain. The prose Life, it is easy to see, is a work which, in its original form, might well date from a period before the XIIth century, and the metrical Life, which is evidently

based upon it, is clearly some two or three centuries later. It is impossible to assign an exact date for the composition of the later work, chiefly because so little is known about the history of the Monastery of Rabban Hôrmîzd during the Middle Ages, but when it was written that famous religious house would appear to have been in a very flourishing condition; for the great length of the metrical Life of the Saint, and the fact that it was sung throughout on the days of the festivals of his commemoration indicate that the brethren were numerous, and that the following of Rabban Hôrmîzd was a large one. From the compositions published in the present work the following facts of the Life of Rabban Hôrmîzd may be ascertained.

Hôrmîzd was born at Bêth Lâphat, that is to say Shirâz, in the country of the Huzâyê, either in the latter half of the sixth or in the first half of the seventh century of our era; his father was called Joseph and his mother Thecla, and both parents were wealthy Christians and were famed for their almsgiving. At the age of twelve he was sent to school, at eighteen he could repeat by heart the Psalms and the New Testament, and at twenty he set out on a journey to the desert of Scete, where he wished to become a monk. On the road he met three monks of the Monastery of Bar-'Idtâ, who urged him to become an inmate of their monastery, and he did so; a few

months after his entrance there he received the tonsure and thus finally adopted the profession of monk. He lived a hard, stern life, and his ascetic virtues were so great that he is declared to have raised a dead youth to life, and to have turned water into oil. When he had served in the monastery for seven years Sylvanus, Bishop of Kardô, visited the Abbot on certain business, and discovering by conversation with Hôrmîzd, who was now twenty-seven years of age, that the young man was far advanced in the spiritual life, persuaded him to forsake the monastery, and to make a cell for himself wherein he could follow the life of an anchorite. This he did, and his life became more strict than ever; he fasted for ten days at a time and enjoyed no regular sleep at nights, and such short intervals of oblivion as exhausted nature made him fall into he obtained by leaning against the stone walls of his cell; he passed most of each day and of each night in vigil, and in prayer, which was accompanied by tears. This manner of life is declared to have conduced greatly to the refinement of his spiritual nature, and to have enabled him to understand "things near and afar off", and to have enabled him to drive away the Devil and his hosts who tormented him frequently, and came to him in forms of various kinds. When Hôrmîzd had lived in and near the Monastery of Bar-'Idtâ for thirty-nine years, he departed and took up his abode in the monastery of Abbâ

Abraham of Rîshâ ; he was now fifty-nine years of age, and was able to perform miracles of all kinds. Six or seven years later, *i. e.*, at the age of sixty-five or sixty-six, he left the second of the monasteries which had been his homes, and passing out of the country of Margâ went and settled down in the mountain of Bêth 'Edhrai near Al-Ḳôsh. When he had been there some little time the people in the neighbourhood offered to build him a monastery, and Khôdhâhwî, the son of Shûbhî, having contributed seven talents of silver, and 'Ukbê, the governor of Môşul, three more, the work was taken in hand straightway, and the building was finished in twenty months ; the consecration ceremony was performed by Jomarşâ II, the Catholicus, who signed a deed declaring that the monastery was to be under the direct jurisdiction of the Nestorian Patriarch, and that no Metropolitan or Bishop should have any authority to interfere in any way with Rabban Hôrmîzd's administration of it. 'Ukbê, the governor of Môşul, was clearly a patron of the Nestorians, for he expelled the Jacobites from the district wherein Hôrmîzd lived, and Nestorians came and settled in their place. At no great distance from Al-Ḳôsh was the town of Arsham, where there were many Jacobites, but under the favour of the governor 'Abhd-İshô, Bishop of Bêth Nûhdhérân, and Hôrmîzd went and consecrated a Nestorian church there. Close by, too, was the Jacobite monastery of

Bezkîn, where, according to the narrator of Hôrmîzd's life, the monks led a very immoral life, and bitter enmity existed between its Abbot and his monks, and Hôrmîzd, and his followers. As a result of this ten monks of Bezkîn went to Hôrmîzd's cell and tried to kill him, and having failed to do so, they brought against him serious charges of having committed fornication and murder ; Hôrmîzd, however, was protected by Providence from the assault of those who intended to murder him, and was able to prove before the governor of Môşul his innocence of the foul charges which had been brought against him. Soon after this the son of the Arab governor of Môşul, who was sick unto death, was healed by Hôrmîzd, whereupon the monks of the Monastery of Bezkîn joined with those of the Monastery of Mâr Mattai on Gebel Maklûb in making an attempt to drive him out of the district, but they were unsuccessful ; Divine Providence seeing that the monks of the former house had filled up the measure of their iniquity decreed their destruction, and sent an angel to carry it out forthwith. The angel carried in his right hand a crowbar wherewith he smote the walls of the Monastery of Bezkîn and overthrew them, and the governor 'Ukbê only succeeded in escaping with difficulty ; as soon as the Nestorians of Arsham, and Ḥarâbhâ, and Kezyôn heard what had happened they swarmed over the mountains and carried off everything which they could remove.

The destruction of the Monastery of Bezkin made bold the Nestorians in the neighbourhood in general, and Hôrmîzd in particular, for he was moved to go to the Monastery of Mattai and destroy an idol which was said to be worshipped there. Unknown to his monks Hôrmîzd set out at daybreak, and arrived at the Jacobite monastery at sunset. The journey must have been hard work for the old man, for from Al-Kôsh to Mâr Mattai by any road cannot be a distance of less than twenty miles; the climb up from the plain to the top of the mountain on which the monastery is built was long and extremely tiring for aged feet, but Hôrmîzd, animated by his fanatical courage and spirit, found it no obstacle to his progress. When he arrived at the door of the Monastery he spoke to the porter civilly, and having been deceived by a number of falsehoods which Hôrmîzd told him, he led him into the building, and having brought him into the place of the shrine of the holy man Mâr Mattai, he left him for the night. As soon as he was alone Hôrmîzd prayed, and the angel of the Lord having come to his assistance, he broke open the shrine, and took out from beneath it "a "miserable little idol of brass, the eyes of which were "of gems made of striped beryls". According to the historian of Hôrmîzd's life it was "Marcion the sorcerer", who flourished in the second century, who led astray and corrupted the Jacobites, and taught them

to hide “miserable little idols” in their shrines, and his error was approved of and ratified by Cyril of Alexandria, the great opponent of Nestorius from A. D. 428 to 444. The angel who was with Hôrmîzd told him that these idols, or figures, were intended to protect their worshippers from evil spirits and devils of every kind, but the fact that they were placed “in the lowermost parts” of the shrines, *i. e.*, beneath them, indicates that they were believed to protect the shrine itself and the building in which it was contained. That Marcion or Cyril introduced the custom of placing figures or idols under shrines may well be doubted, for it is known that the Babylonians and Assyrians hoped to protect their buildings by means of figures of gods or devils which they buried beneath the pavements of certain parts of them. A similar custom existed, of course, in Egypt, but it is far more likely that the Jacobites inherited their belief in the efficacy of magical figures of gods from the Pagan inhabitants of Mesopotamia than that they adopted it from the Egyptians. Cyril of Alexandria, who is, in our text, called the “priest of devils and the minister of fiends”, may have permitted the Mesopotamian Jacobites to retain the heathen custom because he was familiar with it in Egypt, but whether he did so through the influence of the Egyptian sorceress “Kâkî”, *i. e.* Kâkî, cannot be said. Hôrmîzd having stolen the brass figure from the shrine of Mâr

Mattai was taken by the angel of the Lord and carried back by miraculous agency to his own monastery, where he at once displayed his theft to the one hundred and eleven monks who formed his household. As a result of certain prayers made by Hôrmîzd the brass figure began to speak, and to bewail his evil estate and to lament that he had become the laughing stock of those who had once worshipped him ; to degrade him still more George a priest took the idol and carried it about through the villages and told all the people its history. The next exploit of Hôrmîzd was to go again to the Monastery of Mâr Mattai, and, having obtained access to the chamber where the books were kept, to defile and destroy a number of Jacobite works by means of a fountain of filthy water, which welled up there in answer to his prayers ; as soon as this act of destruction was committed the water ceased to flow, and the “angel of the Lord” carried him bodily out of the monastery and deposited him outside the gate, from which place he made his way home.

Soon after these things Hôrmîzd involved himself in a dispute with Ignatius, who appears to have been the archimandrite of Mâr Mattai, and who was said to offer up birds, kids, sheep, cats, apes, etc., in his cell as offerings to the devil whom he worshipped, and to burn magical drugs instead of incense. Ignatius bewitched the governor of Môsul by means of

certain magical cakes which were made in the form of the devil whom he worshipped, and succeeded in inducing him to summon Hôrmîzd into his presence that he might witness a contest between the magical powers which both Ignatius and Hôrmîzd claimed to possess. This governor was not 'Ukbê, but his successor who was called 'Ali, and he seems to have been an intimate friend of Ignatius, who had worked his sorceries upon his sick son, a boy of thirteen. Hôrmîzd came in answer to the urgent summons of 'Ali, and having walked over the waters of the Tigris into Môşul by his miraculous power, he entered the governor's house and stood before him. When all was ready Ignatius invoked his devils, and they came and carried him up into the air to make manifest their great power, but Hôrmîzd laid a ban upon them in the name of Christ, and made them to stay in mid-air, and to hold Ignatius fast there for a season. When he was satisfied that he had displayed the superiority of his power to the governor and his company, he removed the ban from the devils and ordered them to drop Ignatius down upon the earth; this they did straightway and he fell to the ground, and his body burst asunder, and he died, even as did Arius. Thus Hôrmîzd once again triumphed over the Jacobites, and he convinced the governor of the greatness of his power, by healing his son; finally he died in his own monastery, aged eighty-six or eighty-seven years.

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A perusal of the Lives of Rabban Hôrmîzd will convince the reader that they are not of any great historical value, but that they are, notwithstanding, of considerable importance there can be no doubt. They describe incidentally how the famous Monastery near Al-Ḳôsh came to be built, and they illustrate very clearly the character of Nestorian Christianity in the seventh and following centuries of our era. They prove that the belief in magic was rife both among the Nestorians and Jacobites, and that several centuries of Christianity had not succeeded in eliminating it from their minds. They believed that men who led ascetic lives obtained the power of working miracles and of raising the dead, and of altering and suspending the laws of nature whenever the interests of themselves or of their followers demanded it. It is also clear that the followers of each saint ascribed to him in due order healing and life-giving attributes, which, they asserted, were identical in power and efficacy with those of Christ and His Apostles. The character of Hôrmîzd is well described, and may be taken as a good type of that of all great Nestorian ascetics from his own day to the present time; we see that he was curiously humble in some things, and unnaturally vain in others, and that abject self-abasement and intense conceit were mingled in equal proportions in his disposition. He was, however, a spiritual force in the country wherein he lived, and

the mediaeval Christianity of Mesopotamia and of the mountainous districts to the north and north-east of Môşul owes much to him and his fellows, whose holy though unpractical lives moved the peoples about them to godly works, and whose acts were devoted to the attempt to stem the mighty tide of Muhammananism which was flooding the land everywhere. Too much attention must not, of course, be paid to the statements made about the Jacobites by the Nestorians in their works, for then, as now, these sects were very jealous of each other, and the description of the baptism of the son of the governor of Môşul, as well as that of the trial of the magical powers of Hôrmîzd and Ignatius, must be received with great caution. Before we pass to the consideration of the Life of Bar-İdtâ it may be well to describe briefly the Monastery of Rabban Hôrmîzd as it exists in our days.

This building lies about twenty-eight or thirty miles to the north of Môşul, and about a mile from the little Chaldaean town of Al-Kôsh, which is famous among the Christian sects of Mesopotamia as the birth-place of Nahum the Prophet. It is built half about half way up the range of mountains which encloses the plain of Môşul on the north, and stands in a sort of amphitheatre, which is approached by a rocky path that leads through a narrow defile; this path has been paved by generations of monks. The

church is of stone and is of a dusky red colour ; it is built upon an enormous rock. In the hills round about the church and buildings of the monastery are rows of caves hewn out of the solid rock, in which the stern ascetics of former generations lived and died. They have neither doors nor any protection from the inclemency of the weather, and the chill which they strike into the visitor gives an idea of what those who lived in them must have suffered from the frosts of winter and the drifting rain. Some of them have niches hewn in their sides or backs in which the monks probably slept, but many lack even these means of comfort. The cells are separate one from the other, and are approached by narrow terraces, but some of them are perched in almost inaccessible places, and, unless other means of entrance existed in former days, could only have been approached by the monks crawling down from the crest of the mountain and swinging themselves into them. I saw no marks of fire in any of the cells. Some cells have a second small cave hewn out behind the larger one which is entered through an opening just large enough for a man of average size to crawl through. The monks belong to the order of Saint Anthony and live stern lives. They eat meat on Easter Day and Christmas Day only, and their usual food consists of boiled wheat and lentils, and dark-coloured, heavy bread cakes. They drink neither wine nor spirits, and

they have neither light nor fire. They drink rain water which they preserve in rock cisterns. They are called to prayer by the ringing of a bell at sunset, midnight, day-break, and at certain times of the day. The number of the monks in 1820 was about fifty; in 1843 it was thirty-nine; in 1879—80 it was sixteen, and in 1890 it was about ten. The library of the monastery formerly contained a number of very valuable manuscripts, but about the year 1844 the Kurds swooped down upon the monks, and pillaged and set fire to the buildings and murdered all who opposed them. The monks succeeded in removing about five hundred MSS to a vault or house on the side of a hill close by, but, unfortunately, a heavy flood of rain from the mountains swept both them and their hiding place away, and nothing more was seen of them. A large number of manuscripts also were destroyed by the Kurds, who cut and tore them up before the eyes of the monks, and who, having defiled the various portions of them, hurled them down into the stream which flows down from the mountain on one side of the monastery. There is, alas, but little worth stealing there now, even by a Kurd, but the Nestorians in the mountains are threatened with destruction by the marauding hill-tribes which rob and plunder unchecked by any. When I visited the monastery in 1890 I made enquiries with the view of ascertaining if the monks ever made any attempt to sing or read

the metrical Life of Rabban Hôrmîzd of which I had seen a copy, and I found they had not, and that they had no knowledge of the past history of their house. Subsequently I asked Mr. Nimrûd Rassam, with whom I visited the monastery, to make further enquiries on the subject, and the result of his researches are expressed in a letter written in Syriac, of which I append the text with an English translation. This document is of considerable interest, for, leaving out of consideration the information which it contains, it illustrates the skill and facility with which educated Nestorians write Syriac at the present day.

LETTER FROM MR. NIMRÛD RASSAM, H. B. M's VICE-  
CONSUL AT MÔSUL.

“Now therefore it hath appeared right and seemly “unto us that with an exact and true examination we “should make known and shew forth concerning the “generation of the holy man Rabban Hôrmîzd, and “concerning his time, and concerning the customs “which are observed in his Monastery at this present “time, to all those who approach [the investigation “of] history.

“Now after this [man] Rabban had been thoroughly “trained in the Holy Scriptures [in] the house of his “parents in Shîrâz, and had arrived at the age of “twenty years, he made up his mind to die unto the

“world in order that he might live unto Christ. And  
“he was directed by the protecting care of Divine  
“Providence, and arrived at and entered into the  
“Monastery of Rabban Bar-‘Idtâ, and he became a  
“monk therein for a space of nine and thirty years.  
“At this time a war broke out between Phocas, the  
“king of the Greeks, and Chosroës, the king of the  
“Persians, in the year of the Greeks nine hundred  
“and eighteen, which is the year six hundred and  
“seven of our Redeemer, according to that which the  
“History of Bar-‘Idtâ sheweth us. Now Rabban Hôr-  
“mîzd was as yet in the Monastery of Rabban Bar-  
“‘Idtâ. And after these things he departed [from that  
“Monastery] in the company of six brethren to the  
“Monastery of Mâr Abhrâhâm, that is, the Monastery  
“of Rishâ, wherein he remained seven years. And  
“from here also, through a divine revelation, he de-  
“parted to the mountain of Bêth ‘Edhrai, and he  
“dwelt alone there in a cave on the eastern side of  
“Al-Kôsh, the village of Nahum the Prophet. And  
“in Rabban Hôrmîzd was fulfilled the revelation which  
“came to Mâr Mikhâ, one of the two and seventy  
“disciples of Mâr Awgîn who, before his death, when  
“he was comforting and encouraging the people of  
“his village Al-Kôsh, made a revelation unto them,  
“saying, ‘God is about to send unto you a great and  
“mighty eagle, and he shall make his nest in this  
“your Mountain, and he shall beget many young

“‘ones ;’ and this thing actually came to pass, and “[the words were] fulfilled in Rabban Hôrmîzd, the “holy man. In his lifetime he built his monastery, “and the brethren gathered together unto him, [and “became] his young ones. And his monastery was “consecrated by Mâr Tûmârsâ, the Catholicus and “Patriarch. And he remained in this monastery two “and twenty years, and Christ wrought by his hands “mighty deeds and miracles ; and, after his death, in “like manner also very many healings were performed “for the sick folk who thronged to his monastery, “and who took refuge in faith in the place where his “bones were laid, and from that time onwards, year “by year, the believing folk gathered together from “out of all the hamlets, and villages, and cities, and “kept a festival in his honour, with watching and “prayer, and with great rejoicing, on the second day “of the third week [after] the Festival of the Resur- “rection ; and they kept another festival of comme- “moration on the first day of Îlôl, and they performed “in full the service of prayer according to the special “order of service which had been duly drawn up for “his commemoration. And afterwards, little by little, “certain other hymns (*or, versicles*) were added unto “the order of service which had been set apart for “him, by Mâr ‘Amânu’îl (Emmanuel), the Metropolitan “of Bêth Garmai, and Mâr Sargîs (Sergius) of Âdhôr- “bâijân, and Mâr Îshô’-yahbh of Arbîl, and George

“Wardâ, and Rabban Âdhâm of ’Akrâ. And the believing men prayed according to this order of service, “and they kept the watch of his festival and also of “his commemoration in his monastery, and in all the “churches in the country round about, until the time “of the Patriarch Mâr Âwdû, when the East began “to perform service to the West. From this time forward the vigil of Rabban Hôrmîzd began to be discontinued and to pass into oblivion, and his festival languished, and his possessions diminished. And as regards his children, they first of all changed garden grapes into wild grapes, and among them were those who clave to him with their lips, but who cursed him in their hearts, and there were some who esteemed the honour of their spiritual father as nakedness, and who treated him lightly; and if a man were to liken them unto those of the sons of Ham [sic] [who mocked their father] they would not be in any way worthy of blame, and the understanding of every rational being must condemn these men who were afflicted with [such] lasting levity. And his sons did not keep in remembrance the words of the wise man who proclaimed, saying, ‘The honour of a man is the honour of his father’, and they did not even dare to keep in remembrance the title of Rabban Hôrmîzd, for instead of ‘Rabban’, they gave him the title of ‘Sahdâ’ (*i. e.*, Martyr), for which there are no grounds whatsoever in the world, inasmuch as

“no man hath either seen or heard that there was a  
“martyr of this name; and mixing words and stringing  
“phrases together they changed the name ‘Hôrmîzd’  
“into ‘Âdhôr Hôrmîzd’, and transformed ‘Rabban’ in-  
“to ‘Sahdâ’, and thus they taught [concerning him].  
“And the dwellers in his monastery abandoned the  
“order of his service of prayer and vigil, and the  
“monks of his house pray the prayer of commemoration  
“for Mâr Pethîôn, and Âdhôr Hôrmîzd, and Ânâhîdh,  
“and in this way, little by little, the monks and all  
“the believing men of country districts and of cities  
“have brought to an end his vigil and commemora-  
“tion in our own time. These things are sufficient to  
“make manifest the truth which hath been asked for,  
“and the lengthy matters which would give labour  
“[to me to write and thee to read] are [here] made  
“very short. Since therefore we have made known  
“that sufficient [hath been said] about these things,  
“let us incline the ear and hearken unto the narrative  
“of the History of Rabban Hôrmîzd.

Your humble friend  
NEMRÔD RASSÂM.

Written at Mâwsel, on  
the XXIInd of Khazîrân,  
in the year MDCCCCI of our Lord.

لَوْسَكَ عَنْهُ مَلْعُونَ مَنْ يَرَى مَعْذِلَةً  
كَلَّا حَلَّ بِعَذَابٍ كُلُّمْ :



କୁମାର ପାତ୍ର

عَنْتَ تَحْمِلُ : عَنْ : سَمِّيَ  
عَنْ . لَمْ يَعْلَمْ .

Passing now to the Life of Bar-‘Idtâ, of which the Syriac text and an English translation thereof are given in the present work, it may be noted that it supplies a great deal of information which is new about the ecclesiastical geography of the province of Margâ. The manuscript from which the Syriac text was copied was in a good state of preservation, and was written in the XIIth or XIIIth century; its possessor valued it very highly, but at his death his library was scattered and the whereabouts of many manuscripts have not been traced. The Life was written by Abraham, a priest, at the command of ‘Abhd-Îshô’, Metropolitan of Adiabene, and is based upon that which was written by Mâr John, a disciple of Bar-‘Idtâ, who flourished about A. D. 660. From it we learn that Bar-‘Idtâ was born at Raşpâ, or Rûşâpâ, a village on the Euphrates; his parents were Christians, but dying when their son was a child the boy was brought up by his sister Hânâh-Îshô’, who was ten years older than he was, and who was a very religious and charitable woman. She first went to Nisibis, where she put her brother to school, and then became a nun in one of the convents in the neighbourhood. Bar-‘Idtâ learned to read and write easily, and a fine memory enabled him to learn the Psalms and several other metrical compositions by heart; he became a monk at the age of twenty-three and lived with the brethren under Mâr Abra-

ham, who seems to have succeeded Narses as head of the College of Nisibis about A. D. 508. Bar-'Idtâ possessed a fine voice, and was very popular among his brethren, and when it was his turn to read the service "his voice would drive away sleep from their eyes". When he had remained for thirty years at Nisibis, he was moved to go forth to the province of Margâ, where he founded his famous monastery, A. Gr. 873 = A. D. 562. His monks were at first ten in number, but subsequently they became very numerous; he worked many miracles and was greatly beloved by all who came in contact with him. He was born about A. D. 509, and died about A. D. 612, aged one hundred and three years.

The contrast between the lives of Hôrmîzd and Bar-'Idtâ is very striking, and the Syriac texts prove that whilst the latter was well educated, from a Nestorian point of view, and tolerant and gracious in his dealings with men, the latter was a man of strictly limited intellectual attainments, but endowed to the full with all the religious enthusiasm and mysticism which are characteristic of a deeply spiritual nature that has been developed by excessive fasting and prayer, and by the abstinence, and self-denial, and nakedness, and voluntary poverty which were inseparably connected with the stern rigour of a solitary life in the mountains. The biographers of Hôrmîzd and Bar-'Idtâ have described the lives of their masters

with both affection and care, and, though they narrate in connexion therewith a number of facts which can only have existed in their imaginations, they have left behind them valuable records of two of the most remarkable Nestorians who ever lived.

E. A. WALLIS BUDGE.

LONDON.

August 15th, 1902.

## Content<sup>g</sup>.

	PAGE
I. THE LIFE OF RABBAN HÔRMÎZD.	
CHAPTER I. THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE. A DISCOURSE ON THE VALUE AND IMPORTANCE OF PRESERVING THE ME- MORIALS OF HOLY MEN, AND A COMPARISON OF RABBAN HÔRMÎZD WITH THE SAINTS OF OLD . . . . .	1—12
CHAPTER II. CONCERNING THE BIRTHPLACE OF RABBAN HÔRMÎZD, HIS PARENTS AND EDUCATION, HIS DECISION TO BECOME A MONK, THE VISION WHICH HE SAW IN WHICH AN ANGEL GIVES HIM A CROWN OF FINE GOLD, AND HIS DEPARTURE FOR JERUSALEM . . . . .	13—17
CHAPTER III. CONCERNING HIS ARRIVAL IN MÂWSEL (MÂWŞIL, THE MODERN MÔŞUL, OR NINEVEH), HIS MEETING WITH THREE OF RABBAN BAR-'IDTÂ'S MONKS IN THE CHURCH OF BÊTH HÂLÂ, AND HIS DECISION TO BECOME A MONK IN THE MONASTERY OF THIS HOLY MAN . . . . .	17—19
CHAPTER IV. CONCERNING HIS ARRIVAL AT THE MONAS- TERY OF RABBAN BAR-'IDTÂ IN MARGÂ, HIS RECEPTION OF THE TONSURE, HIS STERN LIFE OF ABSTINENCE AND SELF- DENIAL, HIS SPIRITUAL POWERS AND GREAT HUMILITY, THE VISIT OF THE DEVIL TO HIM, AND HIS TEMPTATIONS BY DEVILS . . . . .	19—31
CHAPTER V. ON THE RESTORATION TO LIFE OF THE YOUNG MAN WHO WAS VEXED BY A DEVIL . . . . .	31—45
CHAPTER VI. CONCERNING THE CURES WROUGHT BY RAB- BAN HÔRMÎZD, THE RAISING TO LIFE OF THE YOUNG MAN,	

	PAGE
THE CONFESSION OF THE DEVIL, THE ANGER OF SATAN, THE TEMPTATIONS BY FIENDS, ETC. . . . .	45—64
CHAPTER VII. HOW RABBAN HÔRMÎZD TURNED WATER INTO OLIVE OIL, AND RELEASED TWENTY-SEVEN PRISONERS FROM THE PRISON OF THE GOVERNOR, AND HOW MÂR SYLVANUS, BISHOP OF KARDÔ, VISITED THE MONASTERY OF RABBAN BAR-'IDTÂ, HOW RABBAN HÔRMÎZD LEFT THAT MONASTERY WITH RABBAN ABRAHAM . . . . .	64—77
CHAPTER VIII. HOW RABBAN HÔRMÎZD WENT TO THE MONASTERY OF RÎSHÂ, AND CONCERNING THE CURES WHICH HE WROUGHT; THE STORY OF THE YOUNG MAN OF BÂLÂDH WHO WAS CURED OF BLINDNESS; AND OF THE YOUNG MAN WHO HAD BEEN BITTEN BY A MAD DOG; AND OF THE LEPROUS WOMAN FROM MÂWSEL; AND OF THE SHEPHERD WHO ATE POISONED FOOD AND DIED, AND WAS RAISED TO LIFE AGAIN; AND HOW RABBAN HÔRMÎZD WENT TO BÊTH 'EDHRAI	78—85
CHAPTER IX. RABBAN HÔRMÎZD AND THE PEOPLE OF AL-KÔSH, THE CONSECRATION OF THE CHURCH AT ARSHAM, HOW RABBAN RAISED TO LIFE A YOUNG MAN WHO HAD DIED ON THE WAY FROM BÊTH KÔPÂ, AND HOW THE MONKS OF THE JACOBITE MONASTERY OF BEZKÎN HATED RABBAN. HOW TEN MONKS FROM THE MONASTERY OF BEZKÎN FELL UPON RABBAN AND BEAT HIM NEARLY TO DEATH . . . . .	85—90
CHAPTER X. THE STORY OF THE MURDER OF THE HARLOT OF BEZKÎN, AND HOW RABBAN RAISED HER UP FROM THE DEAD TO DECLARE HER MURDERERS, AND HOW HE MADE HER BABY TO SPEAK AND SAY WHO HIS FATHER WAS IN THE PRESENCE OF THE GOVERNOR OF MÂWSEL . . . . .	90—97
CHAPTER XI. HOW SHÂIBÎN THE SON OF THE GOVERNOR OF MÂWSEL WAS HEALED OF HIS DISEASE, HOW THE JACOBITES OF BEZKÎN TRIED TO LEAD THE GOVERNOR ASTRAY, AND HOW RABBAN DECLARED THE SUPERIOR POWER OF NESTORIAN BAPTISM . . . . .	97—103
CHAPTER XII. THE STORY OF THE MIRACLE WHICH HE WROUGHT IN THE MATTER OF THE BAPTISM OF THE GOVERNOR AND HIS SON . . . . .	104—106
CHAPTER XIII. HOW RABBAN SHEWED KINDNESS TO MEN	

	PAGE
WHO HAD COME TO MURDER HIM FROM BEZKÎN, AND HOW IT HAD NO EFFECT ON THEM . . . . .	106—109
<b>CHAPTER XIV.</b> HOW THE MONKS OF BEZKÎN WENT TO THE IDOL IN THE MONASTERY OF MATTAI, AND HOW, BY MAGICAL MEANS, THEY STOLE AWAY THE GOVERNOR'S SENSES, AND HOW HE WENT TO VISIT THE MONKS IN THE MONASTERY OF BEZKIN . . . . .	109—113
<b>CHAPTER XV.</b> THE STORY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE MON- ASTERY OF BEZKÎN AND HOW IT WAS PLUNDERED BY THE MONKS OF MÂR AIT-ALLÂHÂ AND BY THE VILLAGERS ROUND ABOUT, HOW 'ŪKBÈ THE GOVERNOR TOOK UP HIS ABODE AT AL-KÔSH, IN THE HOUSE OF THE DEACON GABRIEL, AND HOW THE MONKS OF MÂR AIT-ALLÂHÂ BEGAN TO BUILD A CHURCH FOR RABBAN . . . . .	114—116
<b>CHAPTER XVI.</b> HOW THE BUILDING OF THE MONASTERY OF RABBAN HÔRMÎZD WAS BEGUN NEAR AL-KÔSH, AND HOW RABBAN HÔRMÎZD WENT TO THE MONASTERY OF MÂR MAT- TAI, AND STOLE THE IDOL FROM THE SHRINE THERE . . . . .	117—122
<b>CHAPTER XVII.</b> HOW THE WORSHIP OF IDOLS GREW AND SPREAD IN MESOPOTAMIA THROUGH THE TEACHING OF A CER- TAIN SORCERESS IN EGYPT, HOW RABBAN SHEWED GABRIEL THE IDOL WHICH HE HAD TAKEN FROM THE MONASTERY OF MÂR MATTAI, HOW THE DEVIL CRIED OUT BEFORE RABBAN IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS DISCIPLES, AND HOW GABRIEL SHEWED THE IDOL TO THE VILLAGERS ROUND ABOUT . . . . .	122—125
<b>CHAPTER XVIII.</b> HOW TÛMÂRSÂ II. THE PATRIARCH AND CA- THOLICUS CAME AND CONSECRATED THE MONASTERY OF RAB- BAN, AND HOW HE EXEMPTED IT FROM THE JURISDICTION OF EVERY ECCLESIASTICAL DIGNITARY EXCEPT THE PATRIARCH .	125—132
<b>CHAPTER XIX.</b> HOW KHÔDÂHWÎ GAVE A GIFT OF MONEY UNTO THE CATHOLICUS TÛMÂRSÂ II . . . . .	132—133
<b>CHAPTER XX.</b> HOW TWENTY JACOBITES WERE DROWNED IN THE TIGRIS THROUGH THE CAPSIZING OF THE FERRY-BOAT OF PÎTHÔN . . . . .	134—138
<b>CHAPTER XXI.</b> HOW RABBAN WENT TO THE MONASTERY OF MÂR MATTAI AND DESTROYED THE BOOKS OF JACOBITE DOC- TRINE CONTAINED THEREIN . . . . .	138—141

CHAPTER XXII. HOW RABBAN TRIUMPHED OVER IGNATIUS THE SORCERER, HOW IGNATIUS QUARRELLED WITH HIS DE- VIL, AND HOW HE WORKED UPON THE MIND OF THE GO- VERNOR OF MÂWSEL THROUGH HIS SORCERIES . . . . .	141—145
CHAPTER XXIII. HOW IGNATIUS CAME TO THE GOVERNOR AND MADE HIM HOSTILE TO RABBAN, HOW IGNATIUS PRE- TENDED TO BE ABLE TO HEAL THE SON OF 'ALI THE GOVERN- OR AND COULD NOT DO SO, HOW 'ALI SENT TO FETCH RABBAN FROM AL-KÔSH, HOW RABBAN CROSSED OVER THE TIGRIS BY WALKING ON THE WATER, HOW HAVING SHEWN HIS POWER OVER THE DEVILS OF IGNATIUS HE CAUSED HIM TO DIE A TERRIBLE DEATH . . . . .	146—154
CHAPTER XXIV. THE LAST WORDS OF RABBAN HÔRMÎZD, HIS DEATH AND BURIAL . . . . .	154—160

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## II. THE LIFE OF RABBAN BAR-'IDTÂ.

	PAGE
1. THE AUTHOR'S DECLARATION OF HIS BELIEF AND THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY . . . . .	163
2. THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE, DESCRIBING HOW THE LIFE OF RABBAN BAR-'IDTÂ CAME TO BE WRITTEN . . . . .	164
3. THE LIFE OF RABBAN BAR-'IDTÂ, HIS BIRTHPLACE AND THE POSITION OF HIS PARENTS IN THE WORLD, HIS SISTER HÂNÂH-ISHÔ', HE GOES TO NISIBIS, HIS EDUCATION, HIS LIFE IN THE GREAT MONASTERY, HIS LIFE IN A SEPARATE CELL, HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH MÂR ABRAHAM, HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE SCRIPTURES AND OF THE WORKS OF ABBÂ ISAIAH, ABBÂ MARK, MÂR EVAGRIUS, GREGORY OF NAZIENZENUS, PALLADIUS, BASIL, NESTORIUS, AND OTHERS, HIS DEPARTURE FROM THE GREAT MONASTERY AT NISIBIS . . . . .	167
I. RABBAN BAR-'IDTÂ LEAVES NISIBIS FOR MARGÂ AFTER A SPIRITED ADDRESS BY MÂR ABRAHAM, HIS FAREWELL TO HIS SISTER, HIS MEETING WITH MÂR ISHÔ'-ZËKHÂ . . . . .	182
II. BAR-'IDTÂ ARRIVES AT BÊTH RASTAK, HE IS BLESSED BY STEPHEN THE ABBOT OF THE MONASTERY OF RISHÂ, WHO FORETELLS WHERE RABBAN SHALL BUILD HIS MONASTERY, ZÂDHÂN-PARRÛKH AND HIS SICK SON, THE ARRIVAL AT THE SITE FOR THE MONASTERY, THE HELP RENDERED BY MÂR JOSEPH AND NINE MONKS FROM THE MONASTERY OF TABHYÂ, THE MEASURING OF THE SITE FOR THE TEMPLE, AND THE FOUNDING OF THE MONASTERY OF RABBAN BAR-'IDTÂ A. GR. 873 . . . . .	191

	PAGE
III. THE STORY OF MËBHÄRAKH AND THE CAMEL, AND OF THE MIRACLE WROUGHT BY RABBAN . . . . .	200
IV. THE DEATH OF MÄR JOSEPH, RABBAN'S SISTER, HAVING FOUNDED A NUNNERY TO THE HONOUR OF PAMBRONIYÄ, DIES AGED 83 YEARS . . . . .	202
V. THE STORY OF ÍSHÔ·SAHBRAN FROM THE MONASTERY OF MÄR MATTAI . . . . .	203
VI. RABBAN RESTORES THE SIGHT OF THE SON OF ÍSHÔ· APRÎ .	206
VII. RABBAN EXPELS A DEVIL FROM THE SON OF ZÄDHÄN-PAR-RÜKH . . . . .	208
VIII. RABBAN'S VIEWS ON ASCETICISM . . . . .	209
IX. RABBAN AND MÄR BÄBHAI SET DOWN THE NESTORIAN FAITH IN WRITING FOR KHUSRAU, KING OF PERSIA . . . . .	211
X. THE STORY OF BISHOP YAZDPANÄH, WHO SINNED . . . . .	212
XI. THE STORY OF THE DRIVING OF THE DEVILS OUT FROM MALBËD'S HOUSE . . . . .	214
XII. THE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF MONKS IN RABBAN'S MONASTERY . . . . .	216
XIII. THE DEATH OF BËRÎKH-ÍSHÔ· . . . . .	217
XIV. THE STORY OF MATTHEW OF BËTH GARMAI AND THE ENCHANTED WELL . . . . .	218
XV. THE STORY OF YAZDÄDH AND THE BLIND WOMAN . . . . .	219
XVI. THE STORY OF TËRÎŞ-ÍSHÔ· AND THE SOLDIER . . . . .	219
XVII. THE STORY OF DÄDH-ÍSHÔ· WHO PLAYED WITH LIONS . . . . .	220
XVIII. THE STORY OF ZAKHÄI AND THE SICK WOMAN . . . . .	222
XIX. THE STORY OF NÎSÂNÄYÄ AND THE LOCUSTS . . . . .	223
XX. RABBAN BAR-ÍDTÄ AND MÄR ABHÄ, BISHOP OF NINEVEH . . . . .	224
XXI. OF THE RETURN OF MÄR ABHÄ FROM HIS JOURNEY WITH KHUSRAU . . . . .	225
XXII. THE STORY OF THE GREAT FAMINE WHICH TOOK PLACE IN THE DAYS OF PATRIARCH ÍSHÔ·-YAHBH I. A. D. 580-595 . . . . .	227
XXIII. THE STORY OF THE DISPERSAL OF THE MONKS FROM BËTH 'ÄBHË . . . . .	232
XXIV. BAR-ÍDTÄ ADMONISHES SAHDONA . . . . .	235
XXV. BAR-ÍDTÄ WARNS ÍSHÔ·-SAHBRAN, THE ARCHIMANDRITE OF MÄR MATTAI, OF COMING EVILS, AND CONCERNING	

	PAGE
THE DESTRUCTION OF HIS MONASTERY, AND CONCERN- ING THE ORTHODOXY OF MARGÂ . . . . .	236
XXVI. ZAKHÂI (NÂNÂ) AND HIS TWELVE DEVILS . . . . .	241
XXVII. THE DISGRACE OF NÂNÂ, AND THE EXPOSURE OF THE VIEWS OF ZAKHÂI, THE FOLLOWER OF SEVERUS . . . . .	242
XXVIII. DEVILS APPEAR TO RABBAN THROUGH THE AGENCY OF ZAKHÂI . . . . .	244
XXIX. THE STORY OF BAR-SÂHDÈ AND HIS BOOKS, AND OF THE VEIL FROM THE MONASTERY OF ADDÔNÂ, AND OF THE VISION WHICH MÂR YÔZÂDHÂK SAW . . . . .	245
XXX. OF THE PROPHETIC VISIONS OF RABBAN BAR-IDTÂ . . . . .	251
XXXI. RABBAN HÔRMÎZD AND RABBAN MÂR YÔZÂDHÂK . . . . .	256
XXXII. THE COMING OF SERGIUS INTO THE MONASTERY . . . . .	256
XXXIII. THE STORY OF THE SNAKE AND THE WOODCUTTER . . . . .	257
XXXIV. MALBÈDS MOTHER IS CURED OF HER SICKNESS . . . . .	259
XXXV. RABBAN HEALS A DROPSICAL WOMAN . . . . .	260
XXXVI. THE STORY OF THE JEWISH TAILOR WHO BECAME CON- VERTED TO NESTORIANISM . . . . .	261
XXXVII. RABBAN CAUSES A WOMAN TO HAVE THREE SONS . . . . .	262
XXXVIII. THE STORY OF JOB OF THE VILLAGE OF BÊTH KAR- TÈWÂYÈ . . . . .	263
XXXIX. THE STORY OF EMMANUEL THE DEACON AND THE LUST- FUL WOMAN . . . . .	265
XL. HOW THE STEP-MOTHER OF GAWS-ISHÔ TRIED TO POISON HIM . . . . .	267
XLI. THE STORY OF THE WOMAN WHO WAS POSSESSED OF A DEVIL . . . . .	268
XLII. RABBAN STRAIGHTENS THE TWISTED FEET OF A YOUNG MAN . . . . .	270
XLIII. RABBAN DRIVES A DEVIL OUT FROM A BRIDE . . . . .	271
XLIV. RABBAN DRIVES A DEVIL OUT FROM A WOMAN OF BAR- SHÎRÂ . . . . .	273
XLV. RABBAN STAYS A PLAGUE AMONG THE SHEEP . . . . .	273
XLVI. RABBAN GIVES YAZDÎN A SON AND HEIR . . . . .	274
XLVII. THE STORY OF THE SINFUL VIRGIN . . . . .	275
XLVIII. RABBAN HEALS ONE OF THE BRETHREN WHO WAS SICK	276
XLIX. THE STORY OF THE STOLEN BULL . . . . .	277

	PAGE
L. HOW RABBAN CAST OUT A DEVIL, AND HOW THAT DEVIL WENT INTO HIS CELL AND BROKE HIS STOOL AND SMASH- ED HIS WATEKPOT, AND POURED THE CONTENTS OF HIS INK JAR UPON THE PAPER ON WHICH HE WAS WRITING . . . . .	279
LI. HOW A MAGIAN WHO PERSECUTED A NESTORIAN MAIDEN FELL WITH HIS HORSE INTO THE RIVER ZÂBH AND WAS DROWNED . . . . .	280
LII. HOW RABBAN TURNED A SKIN OF WATER INTO WINE . . . . .	281
LIII. HOW RABBAN PROPHESIED THAT HAIL, DROUGHT, AND MILDEW SHOULD COME UPON THE CROPS OF THE VILLAGE OF ḪARBATH NESPÂ BECAUSE ITS INHABITANTS HAD TURN- ED ASIDE TO THE DOCTRINE OF ZAKHÂI, AND HOW THESE THINGS ACTUALLY CAME TO PASS . . . . .	282
LIV. HOW RABBAN'S CROSS KEPT ERROR OUT OF A VILLAGE . . . . .	284
LV. THE STORY OF THE MONK AND THE LION . . . . .	285
LVI. THE STORY OF THE SICK MULE . . . . .	286
LVII. HOW A MONK WAS CURED OF THE LUST OF THE FLESH . . . . .	288
LVIII. THE STORY OF THE BROTHER WHO WAS CURED OF THE GOUT . . . . .	289
LIX. HOW THE WATER FROM RABBANS'S WELL KEPT AWAY DEATH . . . . .	291
LX. HOW RABBAN KEPT AWAY THE WOLVES IN MARGÂ . . . . .	291
LXI. THE STORY OF THE NEWLY-MARRIED COUPLE . . . . .	292
LXII. THE PERIODS OF RABBAN BAR-'IDTÂ'S LIFE . . . . .	294
LXIII. RABBAN BAR-'IDTÂ'S EXHORTATIONS TO HIS MONKS . . . . .	295
LXIV. THE DEATH OF RABBAN BAR-'IDTÂ . . . . .	297
COLOPHONS 1-4 . . . . .	304

THE HISTORY OF THE DIVINE LABOURS AND OF THE  
MARVELLOUS ACTS OF RABBAN HÔRMÎZD, WHICH WAS  
COMPOSED BY THE PIOUS MAN OF GOD, RABBAN MÂR SIMON,  
THE DISCIPLE OF RABBÂ MÂR YÔZÂDHÂK.



[Page 3] By Thy power, O our Lord Jesus Christ, we write Fol. 1 a the history of the divine labours,<sup>1</sup> and of the marvellous acts<sup>2</sup> of Rabban Mâr Hôrmîzd,<sup>3</sup> the anchorite and the soldier of righteousness, which was composed by the pious man of God, Rabban Mâr Simon, the disciple of Rabba Mâr Xozadhâk. May his prayer help us! Amen.

## CHAPTER I.

### The Author's Preface.

The gardener who hath many storehouses of plants in the ground [setteth forth in his garden] the plants which are beautiful to the sight and delightful to look

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<sup>1</sup> A summary of the chief facts in the life of Rabban Hôrmîzd will be found in my *Book of Governors*, vol. 1, p. CLVII ff. (London 1893).

<sup>2</sup> Besides the poetical life of Rabban Hôrmîzd which is given in English at the end of this volume, a poem was composed in his honour by 'Ammanûèl', Bishop of Bêth Garmai (who died A. D. 1080). The text has been published by Gabriel Cardahi, *Liber Thesauri de arte poetica Syrorum*, p. 142 (Rome 1875), and a German translation of it by Prof. G. Hoffmann is in his *Auszüge aus Syrischen Akten Persischer Märtyrer*, p. 19. It is rightly described by this scholar as "eine ebenso freche wie plumpe Fälschung der Stiftungsgeschichte" (see p. 180). Cardahi also published in his work an encomium on Rabban Hôrmîzd by 'Âdham of 'Aqrâ in Margâ, see also Duval, *La Littérature Syriaque* (being vol. 11 of *Anciennes Littératures Chrétiennes*, Paris 1899), p. 217. For the small hymn and encomium on Rabban Hôrmîzd by Mâr Abhâ and Sabhr-Îshô see Assemâni, B. O., III. 1, p. 284, Nos. VI and IX.

<sup>3</sup> Pers. مورموز, Chaldee מָרְמָזָן.

upon ; and it is meet that every man should look with the eye of understanding upon the beautiful things [written in this book] which appeal to the reason, that is to say, the struggles of the contending[s] of **Fol. 1 b** the perfect men and | of the divine athletes who have for generation after generation triumphed gloriously, and who have become a light in the earth, and a mirror in the inhabited world. And from them he should draw, as from a fountain from which divine beauties flow in overwhelming abundance, the spiritual excellences, even in the smallest measure, which will nourish both the body and the soul. Then shall he be “like unto the tree which is planted by the water-brooks,<sup>1</sup> whereof the fruit is meet for food, and the leaves for healing”;<sup>2</sup> and in this wise shall the things which are spoken of assume visible forms unto him, and they shall be found to be possessions which can indeed be acquired, and the soul shall long for them with fervent love, and they shall incite those who behold them to desire them with an exceedingly great desire. For the keeping in remembrance of the histories of men who have led lives of ascetic excellence is merchandize of no small [value], provided that they have been handed down in tradition by those who are well acquainted with them, and who believe in them.<sup>3</sup> Now the keeping in remembrance of the histories which carry edification<sup>4</sup> with them [Page 4] moves the soul to

<sup>1</sup> Ps. I. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. XXII. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, “when in faith they are handed on”.

<sup>4</sup> *I. e.*, which edify their readers from an ascetic point of view. In this work **የዕድል** usually means *ascetic* excellence.

the memory of works of excellence, provided that histories of the kind which I shall now narrate have been set down in writing, for unless they be written down it is impossible that [any] benefit shall flow from them unto those who hearken unto them. Moreover, the lapse of time,<sup>1</sup> and the forgetfulness | of the mat- Fol. 2 aters<sup>2</sup> thereof, I mean to say old age, and death, which itself doth make histories which give edification to pass away, obscure and take away from the mind the power to hold them in remembrance. Now it is a great gift for a man to be strenuous in setting down in writing the divine deeds and conversations<sup>3</sup> of holy men, because then they can never be delivered over unto error and oblivion,<sup>4</sup> and because the acts and deeds which our holy fathers performed in the course of their sojourning in this world were fair and beautiful, and because it is for the benefit of the Church of Christ that the victories of the mighty men who have fought in wars of the spirit and understanding should be written down. And moreover, we must not omit to write down the accounts of the acts, and deeds, and lives of those men who, whilst living in a mortal and passible body, made manifest impassibility; and who, though possessing a nature which was prone to error and which had been formed by the waters of passions, strove to emulate the acts, and deeds, and lives of divine beings. For if we were to hide the glorious

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "in the length of time".

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, the things which happen during the lapse of many years.

<sup>3</sup> ~~क्षेत्र~~ means everything which concerns the habits, dress, conversation, and rules of the monastic life.

<sup>4</sup> *I. e.*, the state of being forgotten.

triumphs of this holy father, this blessed man Rabban Mâr Hôrmîzd, we should merit punishment from his Lord, and he to whom the keeping in remembrance of his marvellous contents, and the honouring of the Fol. 2 b divine labours of this | strenuous athlete of Christ, by setting them down in writing, would be bound by a curse. And the humility of the blessed man, and the sureness of his faith, and the true light of his soul, which illumineth the understanding and enableth it, by means of the mystery of its hidden nature to gaze upon the things which are hidden and cannot be examined into, these things, I say, by reason of the excellence<sup>1</sup> of his divine labours, yield in season and out of season the sweet nourishment of the light which is beyond compare. And the place of his enjoyment is in that of the hosts of light, the children of the Palace of the innermost Holy of Holies, wherein [Page 5] we ascribe holiness to the Most High in the form of the Trinity, Who is eternally hidden from the generations and peoples of the children of men, Who is Very Light of Very Light, and Who is beyond the seasons of Time and the divisions thereof. But He revealed Himself in the flesh in the last times, with a body and with a soul, and He made both celestial and terrestrial beings to marvel [thereat] and to be stupefied with amazement; and by His submissive obedience and by His humility He exalted our contemptible dust to the mighty height of the honour of His Majesty. He is the Self-existent and hidden Being, Who is eternally and everlasting self-existent,

<sup>1</sup> Literally, “prosperity”.

and no limit can be ascribed<sup>1</sup> unto His self-existence by living beings, that is to say, by those who belong to the Nine Classes of Angels,<sup>2</sup> | and by those who <sup>Fol. 3 a</sup> belong to the race of terrestrial<sup>3</sup> beings. Now, when by reason of His love towards us [our] Physician wished to give life unto our deadness,<sup>4</sup> and to direct aright our course of error, and to lighten our darkness, He arrayed Himself in the garb of humility, and gave life unto the deadness of our race through the MAN Jesus Christ. And through His life-giving commandments He guided us into the path of light of His glorious mansions, saying, “Take My yoke “upon you, and learn of Me, for I am lowly and “humble in My heart, and ye shall find rest for your “souls; for My yoke is pleasant, and My burden is “light;”<sup>5</sup> and, “on whom shall I look, and in whom “shall I dwell, except the lowly and humble man who “trembleth at My word?”<sup>6</sup> For humility and lowliness are the armour against all evil spirits, and this our

<sup>1</sup> The general meaning is that God is independent of all considerations of time and that neither aeons nor moments can be employed in formulating the length or duration of His existence.

<sup>2</sup> The Angels consist of Nine Classes and three orders, upper, middle, and lower. The upper order is composed of Cherubim, Seraphim, and Thrones: these are called “priests”, “chief priests”, and “bearers of God’s throne”. The middle order is composed of Lords, Powers, and Rulers, and the lower order consists of Principalities, Archangels, and Angels. A description of the functions of these nine classes is given by Solomon of al-Baṣra: see my *Book of the Bee*, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, “inferior race”.

<sup>4</sup> Or, to vivify our mortality.

<sup>5</sup> See St. Matthew XI. 29, 30.

<sup>6</sup> Isaiah LXVI. 2.

Lord depicted in His own Person. He took a napkin, He girded it about His loins, and He began to wash the feet of His disciples, and to wipe [them] with the napkin which was girded about His loins; thus did that lofty and exalted Prince abase Himself, and the Lord of the Rulers and Governors<sup>1</sup> who were in the heavens bent and brought down to this state of abasement His exalted head; | by the stripping of the body of His manhood He exposed Himself unto the Rulers and Governors, and He put them to shame in His own Person openly, [as if He would say] “For “I have given this example unto you, [Page 6] so that “ye may do [unto others] even as I have done unto “you, for there is no servant who is greater than his “lord, and no apostle who is greater than he that “sent him; and through this armour of humility ye “shall subdue all rebellious strongholds,” according to the word of the Gospel of the divine Paul, who saith, “The armour of our service<sup>2</sup> is not of the flesh, “but of the power of God, and therewith we shall “subdue rebellious strongholds, and overthrow<sup>3</sup> evil “thoughts and every high thing which shall be raised “up against the knowledge of God.”<sup>4</sup> And the holy Apostle saith,<sup>5</sup> “Who shall separate me from the love “of God which is in our Lord Jesus Christ? [Shall] “tribulation, or persecution, or imprisonment, or fa-“mine, or nakedness, or danger, or the sword? As

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, two of the Nine Classes of the Angels.

<sup>2</sup> Or, “fighting”.

<sup>3</sup> *I. e.*, throw down and cover over.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Corinthians X. 4, 5.

<sup>5</sup> Romans VIII. 35—39.

“it is written, For thy sake we die every day, and “we are accounted as sheep for food;<sup>1</sup> but in all “these things we gain the victory through Him that “hath loved us. | For I am persuaded, that neither <sup>Fol. 4 a</sup> death, nor life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor “Powers,<sup>2</sup> nor things which now exist or shall come “into being, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of “God which is in our Lord Jesus Christ.” This is the glorious and excellent offspring of humiliation, and ye must know that it is by this selfsame power of humility that ye shall be able to gird up [your] loins and your divine souls: and by it ye shall be able to gird up your pure souls in such wise that they may become fountains of the humility which breatheth forth the odour of the glorious marriage of the Son of the heavenly King, the Lord of the marriage feast. And moreover, by the oil of loving-kindness the lamps of your understandings shall burn brightly, and ye shall become the sons of your Father which is in heaven, and children of the inheritance of Jesus Christ. What shall we say then? The Gentiles who never followed<sup>3</sup> after the Law [Page 7] have attained<sup>4</sup> unto the law of righteousness, but [the children of] Israel, who were wont to follow after righteousness, never attained unto the righteousness which cometh of faith,<sup>5</sup> | for they <sup>Fol. 4 b</sup> sought to establish the righteousness which cometh of

<sup>1</sup> Psalm XLIV. 22.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, three of the Nine Classes of the Angels.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, “ran after”.

<sup>4</sup> Literally, “overtaken”.

<sup>5</sup> Or, belief.

the Law; and they did not desire to make themselves righteous by the faith of Christ but by the works of the Law which could be made manifest, and thereby they stumbled grievously<sup>1</sup> and fell with a fall which knew no rising up. For who can stand against the things which are wrought by God? Or peradventure, shall the thing which hath been fashioned say unto Him that fashioned it, "Thou hast not fashioned me well?" Or [shall it say], "The potter hath no power over his clay, wherefrom he may fashion some [vessels] for honour, and others for dishonour?"<sup>2</sup>

Now therefore it is the custom of the Divine Book to make mention of the country, and race, and family of the perfect and righteous children of men who in all generations have fulfilled the righteousness of God, even as in the case of Jeremiah the prophet it saith, "When as yet I had not formed thee "in the womb I knew thee, and before thou hadst "gone forth from the belly I sanctified thee, and set "thee [to be] a prophet to the nations."<sup>3</sup> And thus also was it in the case of the selection of the blessed man Abraham, concerning which Moses the prophet relateth, [saying], "And the Lord said unto "Abram, Get thee out from the land in which thou "wast born, and from thy father's house, into a coun- "try which I will shew thee; and I will make thee "a great nation, and I will bless and magnify thy

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "they were tripped up and fell with a fall which was without rising".

<sup>2</sup> Romans IX. 20, 21.

<sup>3</sup> Jeremiah I. 5.

“name.”<sup>1</sup> And our Lord, in His holy | Gospel saith <sup>Fol. 5 a</sup> unto His blessed Apostles, “Behold, have I not chosen “you before the foundations of the world were laid?”<sup>2</sup> And that the Lord knoweth those that are His the Divine Book maketh us to know, and the Apostle Paul saith, “Those whom He hath called He sanctifieth, and “those whom He hath sanctified He praiseth, and those “whom He hath praised He justifieth.”<sup>3</sup>

Now, wonder hath laid hold upon me at this athlete and glorious<sup>4</sup> soldier, this most prosperous merchant,<sup>5</sup> [Page 8] concerning whose glorious attributes it is laid upon [my] words to tell the story, and upon [my] written letters the depicting of his life, and acts, and deeds. And that ye may become heirs of his divine labours ye have commanded me, O chosen brethren of God and habitations of the Holy Ghost, to descend into the depths of this intellectual sea and to bring up to you therefrom the pearl which is adorned with all manner of beauties, that is to say, the history of the athlete of our victorious King, the fame of whose triumphs shall be proclaimed throughout creation among all the generations of the world, whom God made to triumph, and whose memorial God hath magnified in His Church for ever.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis XII. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ephesians I. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Romans VIII. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Literally, “without shame”.

<sup>5</sup>  = πραγματευτής, and the idea which the writer wishes to convey is that Rabban Hôrmizd was a very busy, and strenuous, and prosperous merchant who trafficked in spiritual wares of all kinds.

Fol. 5 b Now<sup>1</sup> Scripture mentioneth the place of his | habitation, and saith, "There was a man in the land of "Uz whose name was Job,<sup>2</sup> and he was an upright "and a righteous man, and afearer of God, and one "who had turned aside from evil." And moreover, concerning Samuel, [it is manifest] that he was a righteous man, and one worthy of keeping in remembrance, and the Book saith, "There was a certain "man of Râmëthâ dhë-Dhâwkê,<sup>3</sup> of the Mount of "Ephraim, whose name was Halkânâ [Elkanah<sup>4</sup>]. We therefore also desire to speak concerning the life, and acts, and deeds, of a man who was renowned for his divine triumphs, not merely as such, but because they were wrought [as a result] of the gift of the grace of our Lord. For who is able to tell concerning [all] the triumphs of him that was arrayed in heavenly victory? [What any man can tell is nothing more in proportion] than is the bucketful of water [in comparison to] the sea. And moreover, we must declare concerning his country, and his city, and his nurture in the fear of God, and the beginning of his discipleship, and his life of sorrow, and his living in the monastery,<sup>5</sup> and his life and habitation in the mountains, and rocks, and caves of the earth; and also

<sup>1</sup> Some lines appear to be omitted from the text here, for the narrative does not run consecutively; we should expect Job and Samuel to be mentioned above with Jeremiah and Abraham.

<sup>2</sup> See Job I. 1.

<sup>3</sup> The LXX has ἐξ Ἀρμαθαῖς Σιφὰ, and the Hebrew מִן-הַרְמָתִים צוֹפִים.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Samuel I. 1.

<sup>5</sup> *I. e.*, the hard life which he led as a coenobite, even before he went out to live alone.

concerning his fasting, and his strict abstinence, and his poverty in dress, and his abnegation, and his asceticism, and his goodness to strangers; and concerning the spiritual endowments [Page 9] and gifts which Christ bestowed upon him because of his divine labours; and concerning the great and mighty signs <sup>Fol. 6 a</sup> and deeds of wonder which Christ wrought by his hands; and concerning the exalted gifts of prophecy and of the knowledge of events before they happened which were granted unto him by the mercy of God. And when, by the help of God, and by the prayers of the blessed man, we draw nigh unto the conclusion of his strife and course, we will make an end of [this] history which is full of victory and divine triumphs.

## CHAPTER II.

### Concerning his family and native country, which was Shîrâz.

Now the family of the blessed man Rabban Hôrmîzd [came] from the country of the Hûzâyê,<sup>1</sup> and belonged to the city of Bêth Lâfat,<sup>2</sup> that is to say, Shîrâz;<sup>3</sup> and the parents of the blessed man were

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, Khuzistan, a mountainous country which lies to the north of the Persian Gulf.

<sup>2</sup> Bêth Lâfat, the בֵּית לָפָת of the Talmud (see Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, p. 41), the πόλις Βηλαπατῶν of Procopius, and the نیلپادز (wrongly for بیلپادز) of Yâkût (see Noeldeke, *Geschichte der Perser*, p. 41). It lay between Susa Shushtar, and has been identified with the city of Shâhâbâdh now in ruins: according to Noeldeke the name means “the park of Bêl” (Bêl-âbâdh).

<sup>3</sup> Shîrâz lies in a high plain or valley about 20 miles long and 10 miles broad, and is, by road, about 165 miles from the modern

Christians, and were firm in the faith. As concerning the riches of [this] world, which passeth away and shall be dissolved, they were exceedingly well provided, and men servants, and maid servants stood before them and ministered unto them with reverence. And his parents performed the service of angels with fasting and with prayer, and they relieved the wants of the poor and needy, and of those who were in misery, and they visited those who were in tribulation. Now the name of his father was Joseph, and that of his mother was Theklâ. And when the child Fol. 6b had arrived at the age of twelve years | they took him to school that he might learn the Psalms and be trained in spiritual doctrine, and when he had remained there learning for six years he could repeat by heart<sup>1</sup> the Psalms and the New Testament, in which books the young man laboured both by night and by day. Now when he had completed the years of his life in that place, and was about twenty years old, there began to stir in him the natural motions of the fear of God which were established in the nature of our constitution by God, the Creator of our nature [Page 10], and these warm desires rose up in him so frequently<sup>2</sup> that he was always saying to his parents, "I will become a monk, and I will prepare "myself with gladness to serve the Lord according to "His will." With this thought of the fear of God, and

city of Bushire near the head of the Persian Gulf. Descriptions of the modern city will be found in the works of Pietro della Valle, Herbert, Chardin, Ouseley, Ker Porter, Morier and others.

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "by the mouth".

<sup>2</sup> The words ,*መመሪያኑን የለም*.

with this righteous meditation his heart burned with divine fire both by night and by day, and he was anxiously desiring and awaiting the time when he might receive the *garb* of a monk.<sup>1</sup> But our Lord knew the mind of the young man, and what was befitting the honour of His service, and the use and wont of the household of His Lordship. And when deep sleep had fallen upon men, and as the young man | was lying upon his bed in the bed-chamber of <sup>Fol. 7 a</sup> his parents' house, and was sunk deeply in sound slumber, a vision appeared unto him from our Lord, Who was sitting upon the throne of the glory of His honour, and the heavenly hosts were standing before Him, and were ascribing holiness to the majesty of His appearance. And as soon as the motions of the soul of the young man had been united by the sweetness of the vision which had [burst] upon him, and by the unparalleled wonder of the sight of the spiritual beings in their natural state, the King of praise gave the command, and one of those spiritual beings who were standing before the King Christ flew and stood before him. And he answered and said unto the young man, "Man, why standest thou in a country which is "not thine, and which belongeth to the country of the "beings of the spirit?" Then the young man answered and said unto the spiritual being, "Because a power "over which I had no control took me from my own "country, and set me down here; but do no harm "unto me, I beseech thee." And the spiritual being answered and said unto him, "Fear thou not, O son

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "this *garb*".

“of man, for it was I who appeared unto thee to lead  
 “thee unto this country and not to do thee any harm;  
 “and as for what thou sayest [‘Harm me not’], I have  
 “done thee no harm up to this present.” Now whilst  
 Fol. 7 b the spiritual being and the young man were holding  
 converse together, suddenly | there appeared in the  
 right hand of the spiritual being a splendid and glori-  
 ous crown [Page 11] of fine<sup>1</sup> gold. And the spiritual  
 being answered and said unto the young man, “Be-  
 “hold, O young man, [how] beautiful in its appearance  
 “is this crown which I hold in my right hand! If thou  
 “wishesst it to be thine I will give it unto thee. If thou  
 “possessest spiritual wings like unto mine, take [it],  
 “and it shall be thine.” And the young man answered  
 and said unto him, “Then give it unto me, master”;  
 and straightway the angel placed the crown on the  
 head of the young man, whereupon the crown began  
 immediately to shine upon his head, and it gave forth  
 splendour, and the spiritual being flew away. And the  
 young man forthwith woke up from his sleep and  
 came to himself, and his thought remained with  
 him,<sup>2</sup> and he straightway understood<sup>3</sup> within himself  
 in a hidden manner what the grace of our Lord had  
 wrought for him. And the fire of his love of Christ  
 burned within the motions of his soul in a hidden  
 manner, but he did not reveal unto flesh and blood  
 the heavenly vision which had been revealed unto  
 him by the mercy of Christ, and he bore [the know-  
 ledge] thereof in the secret chambers of his soul.

<sup>1</sup> Literally, “chosen”.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, “his mind remained upon him”.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, “he learned”.

Then the young man determined<sup>1</sup> to go to Jerusalem and to pray | in the holy places wherein Christ <sup>Fol. 8 a</sup> had wrought His mighty works, and wherein He had gone about in the dispensation of His adorable Manhood; and from there he wished to depart into the Scete Desert<sup>2</sup> and to sojourn with the holy fathers who served God therein. And on a day he lifted up his feet from the house of his parents to depart unto the places which I have mentioned above, and having travelled on his journey for seven and thirty days<sup>3</sup> he arrived at Mâwṣel,<sup>4</sup> and came into the city thereof which is in the country of Nineveh.

### CHAPTER III.

#### On his arrival in Mâwṣel.

And the young man came and took up his abode in one of the churches which were there, and the name thereof was Bêth Hâlâ,<sup>5</sup> and by the Divine agency he found in that church [Page 12] three monks [who] were

<sup>1</sup> Literally, “laid [it] in his mind”.

<sup>2</sup> Hôrmîzd wished to follow the example of many great ascetics who began their careers by making pilgrimages to Jerusalem, the Jordan, Sinai, Mount Horeb, and the Scete Desert.

<sup>3</sup> The distance from Shirâz to Mâwṣel is about 900 miles, and he therefore travelled nearly 25 miles a day.

<sup>4</sup> I. e., Al-Mawsil, الموصى, the famous town on the left bank of the Tigris opposite to the mound called Kuyunjik, which marks part of the site of the ancient city of Nineveh. A list of works wherein the city is described will be found in my *Book of Governors*, vol. II. p. 259 (London 1893).

<sup>5</sup> I. e., Bêth Hâlê, Arab. بَيْت حَلَّةٍ. See Assemâni, *B. O.*, III. 1. p. 155, col. 2, l. 9.

from the Monastery of Saint Rabban Bar-‘Idtâ.<sup>1</sup> One [was] Abbâ Ya‘kôb (Jacob) from Kafr Zamrê,<sup>2</sup> [another was] John Shâmrâhâyâ,<sup>3</sup> and [the third was] Hanân Ishô‘ Hadhayâbhâyâ,<sup>4</sup> [and they were] holy men and masters of the life of contemplation of divine things; and when the young man had been blessed by them he sat down before them. And suddenly divine fire shone upon the young man, and he became wholly on fire with the

Fol. 8 b fire which nothing | resembleth. Now when those pious men who were looking on at the wonderful [sight] saw that the divine fire had enshrouded that young man in a secret manner, they were astonished with a great and mighty astonishment, and the three of them understood concerning the mysteries of the new world, and concerning his election for the service of the hidden life and conversation, and concerning the gifts [of healing] which should be wrought by his hands, and the mighty deeds, and wonders, and acts of might which should be performed through him. Then they were moved by the Holy Spirit and began to prophesy concerning him in a hidden manner, saying, “My son, thou art about to become a chosen “vessel unto Christ, and many shall become members

<sup>1</sup> He was a contemporary of Mâr Bâbhai of Mount Izlâ, of Jacob of Bêth ‘Âbhê, and of Ishô‘-Yahbh of Arzân, and flourished in the last half of the VIth century.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the same as كفر زمار, Kafr Zammâr, a town on the Tigris near Mâwsel.

<sup>3</sup> I. e., the man of Shâmrâh, a village at no great distance from Mâwsel.

<sup>4</sup> I. e., the man of Adiabene. This district included all the land which lay between the Great and Little Zâbh rivers, and even Kurdistan. Hoffmann, *Aussüge*, p. 241, note 1911.

"of the household of our Lord through thee, and at  
 "the uttering of thy name the devils shall flee, and  
 "evil serpents which eject the venom of death at the  
 "remembrance of a word of thine shall be at peace.  
 "But our love [for thee] doth counsel thee to relin-  
 "quish the journey upon which thou now art. Rise  
 "up, now, that we may depart to our monastery, be-  
 "cause our Lord hath revealed unto us the whole  
 "matter of thy election by Him, and that thou art  
 "meet for the honour of the membership of the house-  
 "hold of His Lordship, and for the safe-keeping of  
 "the treasures which, by His mercy, | shall be bestow- Fol. 9 a  
 "ed upon thee in their season, and which, by His  
 "grace and mercy, shall be in very deed perfected  
 "with thee during thy temporary life and after thy  
 "departure from this world. And the spiritual children  
 "[Page 13] which shall be begotten by thee shall enjoy  
 "happiness through thy gracious and pleasant gifts  
 "in a spiritual manner, for thy spiritual house is about  
 "to become in the earth the similitude of the celestial  
 "Jerusalem which is the mother of the saints."

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### On his arrival at the Monastery of Rabban Bar-'Idtâ in Margâ.

Now therefore the righteous young man, like unto  
 good ground which receiveth the seed, and yieldeth  
 fruit thirtyfold, and sixtyfold, and an hundredfold, re-  
 ceived with divine gladness the counsel of these holy  
 old men, and straightway he set out with them from

the city of Mâwsel, and the four of them, together with their coenobite,<sup>1</sup> who is worthy of remembrance for good, journeyed along the way together. And when they had arrived at the monastery and entered therein, that divine congregation received him with the gladness which was befitting the mark of his calling, as did also Rabban Mâr Sabhr-Îshô<sup>2</sup>, the head and ruler of that divine congregation. Now these men were in number two hundred and sixty-four souls, Fol. 9 b and they were pious men, and vessels of grace, and men who were perfect in the practice of the glorious conversation of the monastic life,<sup>3</sup> and they were depicting in their persons the type of the denizens of heaven and of the mysteries of the new world; and these brethren received the young man with simple joy, and with lowly and unfeigned humility. And when the young man Hôrmîzd had entered into the monastery<sup>3</sup> he began to lead a new life and to perform the deeds which belonged unto the angels and to the service of heaven, after the manner of the just and righteous men who had made themselves strangers entirely to the world and unto all that is therein; for the blessed man desired by means of this merchandize of the spirit to please God with his good works, and he was fighting and contending that he might fashion in His image the inheritance of the kingdom

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, a monk who lived with many monks in the common house of the society.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, the practice of the *solitary* life.

<sup>3</sup> *I. e.*, the general buildings of the monastery where the novices lived and monks who could not endure the hardships of life in solitary cells.

of heaven. For he burned through and through [Page 14] with the affection of the love of Christ Who had chosen from the womb this lover of the works which were fair, even as [had chosen] the disciples who had prospered in their calling; and the purity, and integrity, and simplicity of the young man were greatly belov-ed by our Lord, and He answered him speedily and granted unto him his petitions. |

Now, when he had laboured but a very few months <sup>Fol. 10 a</sup> in the community, the brethren brought him on a cer-tain First Day of the week before the place where the altar stood, after they had received the Holy Myste-ries, and Rabban Mâr Sabhr-Îshô' and his holy con-gregation laid [their] hand[s] upon him, and with prayers and psalms of the Holy Spirit shaved him,<sup>1</sup> even according to the word of our Lord, Who said in His Holy Gospel, "Where two or three are gather-ed together in My Name, there am I in their midst."<sup>2</sup> Now henceforth since he had newly received the garb of Christ, and had been changed from that state which belonged to the body into the state of joy of the mind, he became wholly another being,<sup>3</sup> because the

<sup>1</sup> According to one office in use among the Nestorians the candi-date is brought to the "place of prayer" after fifty days' probation, and he is set upon a woollen tunic on the ground with his face to the East. Rabban says, "this tunic is the type of the grave and the world is already dead to thee", and then cuts off the hair from the top of his head, leaving a space like a "wheel and a crown", which he sprinkles with water, saying, "Christ will wash away the impurity of thy sins". See Assemâni, *B. O.*, III. 2. p. 905.

<sup>2</sup> St. Matthew XVIII. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, "he became one instead of another", *i. e.*, the writer means to say, that he became a man whose sole aim and object were

fire of the love of our Lord, which our Lord cast into the world, was rising up in his mind, now it was that same love which had kindled and was burning up brightly in his heart. He laboured in the daytime with the community of the brethren, keeping a calm, and well-ordered, and prudent, and understanding mind, whereby he made his soul a house of the living God; but at eventide,<sup>1</sup> at sunset, when the monk  
Fol. 10 b struck the board<sup>2</sup> | [to summon] the brethren to after-supper prayers, he used to take a portion of the Oblation from the sacristan<sup>3</sup> and pass his evenings fasting, with the exception of a handful of water wherein he placed the portion of the Oblation. In this manner he would endure fasting for the whole week until he received the Holy Mysteries on the First Day of the week, after which at a time that was late in the night<sup>4</sup> he would take food which consisted of nothing but bread, and water, and salt. Now, he possessed in his soul by nature a firm, simple, and unfeigned humility [Page 15] in a peculiar degree, and this humility was bestowed upon him by the Father of lights. And his

to live the life of the spirit, and that his whole moral nature was entirely changed shortly after he had received the tonsure.

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "at the season of evening, at the westernings of the sun".

<sup>2</sup> The monks having no bells were assembled, when required by the Archimandrite for any reason whatsoever, by the beating of a thick plank of wood, or board, which was either suspended on a frame, or held up by various means above the shoulders of the man appointed to beat it.

<sup>3</sup> **κατό** is the man who belonged to the **κατό**, i. e., **κόγγη**, or *apse* of the church.

<sup>4</sup> Literally, “deep evening”.

abstinence surpassed the measure and capacity of mortal man, and he wished not to bring nigh unto his lips anything whatsoever which the earth brought forth, or even the fruits of trees. Now he continued to lead this stern life of labour for seven years in the silence of understanding, and the whole congregation of the monks of that holy monastery, together with all those who were acquainted with him, ascribed unto him blessing upon blessing; and they meditated within themselves, saying, "What will become of this young man?" And he made his soul to be the habitation <sup>Fol. 11 a</sup> of every ascetic excellence, for he was chaste, and long-suffering, and wise, and a Gîhôn in intelligence,<sup>1</sup> and prudent, and of great discernment, and he possessed in his soul in a remarkable degree the power to understand the things of wisdom, and in his pure soul was an exceedingly great abundance of knowledge. Now these qualities of spiritual excellence are usually only found in very aged men, or in those who have lived a considerable time, for they are only acquired slowly and by degrees.<sup>2</sup>

And in the night, when his companions who lived within the monastery [with him] had given themselves up to a little rest in sleep, the blessed man used to rise up from among the brethren, and gird up his loins with a piece of twisted rope, and then go down to the furnace (*or oven*) of the community, and he would clean out the ashes therefrom with his own

<sup>1</sup> The Gihon river is usually identified with the Nile, and the writer wishes to indicate that the intelligence of Hôrmizd was as deep, and as full, and as abundant as the waters of that river.

<sup>2</sup> The word  must have dropped out of the text here.

hands. Moreover, he devoted himself to the purification of the monastery, for with divine humility and with the lowly humbleness of understanding he used to clean out the latrines with his own hands for our Lord's sake; and he was most strenuous in caring for everything of which the mortal body had need, and in relieving the wants of his brethren.<sup>1</sup> Now whilst

Fol. 11 b he was thus doing and ministering with the eye | of discernment of the fear of God, he devoted himself to service and ministrations of prayer before God, and he was always singing the sections of the Psalms, and hymns of praise, and ascribing glory unto God because of all His gifts of grace [Page 16] to him. And our Lord saw his labour, and his love, and his affection for Him, and his watchfulness and strenuousness in the keeping of His life-giving commandments, and that he had adorned himself with all qualities of ascetic excellence, and especially with the whole adornment of humility, which is the garb of Christ, Who giveth grace unto the humble, and, as it is said, "now unto the humble mysteries are revealed". Now the grace of our Lord began to shine in the intelligence of the righteous man gloriously and brilliantly, and He immediately opened before him His hidden treasures in his holy mind in a hidden manner, even as with the chosen young man Samuel, who was asked from God, and upon whom, by reason of his purity and simplicity, was poured out the spirit of Christ.

Now the young man was exposing the wiles and

<sup>1</sup> I. e., he performed the most menial services for the monks in the monastery.

crafts of the rebellious devils, and he did not permit them to lay out their snares with secret guile before his simple companions | and fellow monks, but he ad- <sup>Fol. 12 a</sup> monished them and made clear unto them the various devices of the cunning of the devils: And when his companions the coenobites saw the great gift which had been given unto him by the mercy of Christ they called him the “Physician of the coenobites”. But when the old Enemy, the hater of the truth, saw the laudable deeds and life of perfection he was filled with envy of the holy man Abbâ Hôrmîzd, and raged with furious wrath against him. And on a certain night, when he was continuing in vigil and was alone in his prayer before our Lord, the devils rose up before him, and answered and said unto him, “O thou good “young man, Hôrmîzd, wherefore dost thou drive us “away? In what thing have we offended against thee? “Shew us why thou dost persecute both us and thy-“self, and why war is directed by thee against us. “Unto me hath been delivered this world and all that “therein is. Thou art a young man [Page 17] and a “wise, but thou dost not comprehend<sup>1</sup> my sovereignty, “for thou art a young man who dost only discern the “things which ought to be.<sup>2</sup> If thou desirest I will “make thee to triumph over all the monks who live “in this region of the east, and thou shalt be more “glorious than all those who have triumphed | therein, <sup>Fol. 12 b</sup> “and thy glory shall be greater than that of all the “men of old who have lived before thy time. And I

<sup>1</sup> Literally, “thou art not sensible of”.

<sup>2</sup> Or, “things which are seemly”.

“will shew thee my glory, even as I have shewn [it]  
 “unto thy triumphant fathers, and I will fill thee with  
 “my spirit, and will reveal unto thee all my hidden  
 “things, and will teach thee all my secret things to  
 “the uttermost of my will,<sup>1</sup> and thy glory shall have  
 “overwhelming power before kings and governors. I  
 “have many things which I can teach thee, the which  
 “I desire now to hide from thee. Now if thou wilt  
 “hearken unto me thou shalt live before me a life of  
 “rest, and peace, and happiness; but if thou dost re-  
 “sist me, and dost set thyself in opposition to my  
 “words, thy days shall be [passed] in tribulations with  
 “me, and I will afflict thee greatly, and thou shalt  
 “live in cruel sufferings with me. But be persuaded  
 “[to obey] my words, and to receive the fair counsel  
 “which I have spoken unto thee, O young man.”

Now up to this point the holy man had listened unto the Devil. Then the holy man repulsed the Devil, and said unto him, “Close thy mouth, O thou insolent one, from [uttering] these words, O thou lying one and father of falsehood, for Christ, my King, and my God, and the Teacher of the truth, is sufficient Fol. 13 a “for me. By the venom of thy crafty doctrine | thou slayest man; of what use to me is thy counsel, O thou who wouldst destroy my life? I shall never become a participator in the impurity of thy wickedness because Christ hath made me full of the love of the holy love of Him that hath vanquished thee, and hath made bare the wiles and crafts of thy wickedness. And He hath given unto us feeble folk

<sup>1</sup> Literally, “in all the fulfilment of my will”.

“the power to tread under foot by His humility thy head, provided that we keep His commandments with strenuousness, and by His strong power He hath made thee to be an object of disgrace and a thing to be trodden upon by His friends. In the Name of Jesus the Nazarene, cease from thy blasphemy, O thou insolent one.” Then Satan took to flight before the holy man at the utterance of the Name of Jesus the Nazarene, and as he was flying away through the air, being vanquished, [Page 18] he cried out, saying, “Can this follower of Nimrod<sup>1</sup> think in very truth that he hath vanquished me? For little by little I will trip him up in his exalted estate until I have brought him down to the depth wherein there is no place to stand upon,<sup>2</sup> even as I have done unto many others who were proud of and were perfect in the affection of the love of the Nazarene.” And these words the Devil, being exceedingly angry,<sup>3</sup> made the holy man to hear.

And when the holy man saw the defeat of the Devil he was not lifted up in his mind, but he gave <sup>Fol. 13 b</sup> thanks before our Lord with a humble heart, saying, “O our Lord Jesus, Thou Conquering King, Who by Thy divine humility hast crushed the heads of this evil Leviathan which can [only] be perceived by the mind, Thou, O our Lord, didst bow for us Thy head

<sup>1</sup> The lexicons explain the name by **ନିମ୍ରଦ** “rebel”, connecting it with the root **ନିମ୍ର**; it is possible that **ନିମ୍ରଦ** may here mean “rebellious one”.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, “I will bring him down by a fall from which there is no rising up”.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, “bitter”.

“upon the Cross, and thereby didst make to be bowed low the head of Satan, our Enemy, and didst pluck the victory which can never be taken away [from “Thee], and Thou didst say, ‘Fear ye not, but be of good courage, for I have overcome the world,’ Thou “in Thy grace hast given unto us Thy divine gift “whereby we may tread under foot serpents and scorpions, and the whole power of the Evil One.” And moreover, our Lord promised His servants, and said unto them, “Go forth and teach and baptize all nations in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, “and of the Holy Ghost.<sup>2</sup> Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, open the eyes of the blind, cast out devils, “and raise the dead to life. Ye shall speak with new “tongues, and ye shall lay your hands upon the sick “and they shall be healed, and even if ye drink poison it shall not harm you.”<sup>3</sup> And in very truth the promises of our Lord unto His disciples have been fulfilled throughout all the generations of the world,

Fol. 14 a and He hath raised up unto Himself | spiritual physicians in His Church that they might be the salt which should salt the palates of those who had lost their taste, and the light which should illumine the hearts which had become darkened, and should direct and lead the children of men into the great and beautiful habitation of the spiritual beings. And after this manner even in that period [Page 19] of dryness and feebleness did He raise up this young man Hôrmîzd,

<sup>1</sup> St. John XVI. 33.

<sup>2</sup> St. Matthew XXVIII. 19.

<sup>3</sup> St. Mark XVI. 17, 18.

who renewed his strength by the Holy Spirit, and was distinguished<sup>1</sup> and pre-eminent among the stewards of spiritual treasures, that he might give and distribute, without accepting the person of any man, the money of his Master unto his companions.

Now, although Satan had been vanquished in this first contest, he neither remained quiet nor desisted from his tyrannical persecution [of the young man], but on another night, a second time, [all] the devils of all creation gathered themselves together with their princes and governors; and they were holding horns and trumpets which [produced] all kinds of sweet music; and they were arrayed in white garments which shone like lightning shooting forth splendour and glory; and they surrounded the young man on every side in a bold and insolent manner so that they might make him to desist from his prayer and conversation with God. But the mind of the young man, who was mighty in God, united the gaze of his understanding unto Him, and by the divine union of the two spiritual powers<sup>2</sup> he breathed upon that polluted horde of devils the Fol. 14 b fiery blaze of fierce lightning, and suddenly, even like a light summer cloud, the company of devils disappeared from the air. For the holy light which was united with his luminous soul covered as with a cloud the young man who was strong in his God, and thereby his soul and the members thereof enjoyed the gladness of divine things, the extent and greatness of which the tongue of the flesh hath power neither to utter nor to declare.

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "written down and set apart".

<sup>2</sup> Or, the two powers of the mind.

And for all these things the holy man gave thanks unto the grace of our Lord with a humble heart, and with tears of anguish, saying, "O our Lord Jesus "Christ, Thou beloved Son, for the sake of Whose "sweet and holy love Thy servants go down daily into "the strife for Thy kingdom—now from out of the strife "crowns appear—and they gain through mighty labours "and anxious care the glory and the exalted happiness of the kingdom of heaven, [Page 20] according "to the word of the blessed man Paul, who said, Who—"soever laboureth in contending keepeth his mind "[free] from every other thing, for without the shedding "of blood there is no remission [of sins," help me.]<sup>1</sup>

Fol. 15 <sup>a</sup> This holy man then stripped himself | of every material thing which belongeth unto this corruptible world, and with all the members of his soul he laid hold upon our Lord only, the rich Man Who had taken up His abode in the house of the poor man, and He enriched him with His gifts and with the things which He bestowed upon him, and the poor man became rich like unto his Master, not according to what was natural, but by grace. [For He saith], "Whosoever loveth Me, "and keepeth My word, I will love him and will shew "him Myself, and I and My Father will come to him, "and will make [Our] habitations with him."<sup>2</sup> Therefore the young man made his shining soul a dwelling-place for the Holy Spirit, and by his glorious acts and life he became a mirror unto all the holy fathers and brethren who laboured in the ascetic life. For the

<sup>1</sup> Compare 2 Timothy II. 3, 4; Hebrews IX. 22.

<sup>2</sup> St. John XIV. 23.

remembrance of his name among them was more beloved than their living breath, and the triumphs of his humility and lowness, and the purity and simplicity of his soul and of his ready obedience, which surpassed the power of the meek (*or* humble), were renowned among them. And the young man of Christ made himself to be a winnowing fan<sup>1</sup> and a means of propitiation for the whole brotherhood.

## CHAPTER V.

### Of the restoration to life of the young man who was vexed by a devil.

And it came to pass one day that certain folk brought to that Monastery a youth who was | twelve Fol. 15 b years old, and who was vexed by an evil devil, and he remained there for nine and twenty days. And he was most grievously worked upon by that devil, for he was tortured by him in such wise that he broke [his] fetters (*or*, chains) and tore his garments in rags off his body, and bit off the flesh of his arms with his teeth and gnawed [it], and those who were with him were in such sore tribulation that they were unable [Page 21] to leave him at any time, either by day or by night, lest quickly and speedily his life should be destroyed by the devil who was contending against the young man. Now the holy congregation were suffering much on his behalf, and with one accord they made prayer for him that, if it were possible the youth

<sup>1</sup> The text has *ବୁନ୍ଦା*, but we must read *ବୁନ୍ଦାର*.

might be released from his tribulation by any means which should be in conformity with the Divine Will. And our Lord hearkened unto the petition of His servants after the manner of Divine Providence, and He released the youth from this temporary life, and his soul departed from his vexed body unto divine life and rest. Now his parents, and his brethren, and the members of his household were weeping for the departure of the young man in bitter suffering and with sorrowful tears, and by reason of the pain of their

Fol. 16 <sup>a</sup> sore sorrow, | whereby the soul was led captive by their tearful grief, the sound of their voice[s] resounded throughout the whole Monastery; and every one who heard the sound of their crying was drawn to weep tears of sympathy and [to feel] anguish of soul. Now inasmuch as Rabban Hôrmîzd was serving in that part of the Monastery where the monks lived together, he was moved the more by the bitter lamentations [of the friends and relatives of the young man], but he did not permit himself to go<sup>1</sup> and look upon their sorrowful company. But the lovingkindness which filled his soul drew him to go to the place where the company of strangers was weeping, and the humility of the mind of him that was penitent in spirit stirred within him.

And when he had drawn nigh unto them, and had seen the company in bitter and tearful mourning, the young man of Christ sat down opposite [to them], and wept with them tears of sorrow mingled with

<sup>1</sup> The text seems to be corrupt here, and for *لِرَبِّنَ رَبِّنَ* we should probably read, *لِرَبِّنَ*.

lamentations. Now when our Lord saw that His athlete was so greatly wrought upon by sorrow on their behalf, by His lovingkindness and grace He wished to comfort them ; and the young man perceived in his holy mind in a hidden manner that the mercy of Christ was to be manifested upon them. And by reason of the freedom of speech which Christ had bestowed upon His servant, Rabban Hôrmîzd, the servant began | to make entreaty to His Master Fol. 16 b [Page 22] through the great affection and lovingkindness which had stirred up His petitioner. Then the blessed man prayed with tears and sighs on their behalf, and the tribulation of those who were in affliction pressed heavily upon his mind, and the athlete of Christ cast [himself] into the strife on their behalf, and our Lord was not unmindful of him that made entreaty into Him, because he was making supplication unto Him for what He had fashioned. He stirred up His servant according to His will to beseech in love for mercy for those who were in affliction, and the Creator moved in love the soul of the young man within him. And the flesh of the young man [who was dead] began to tremble, and the movements thereof to be endued with life, and it was necessary that the glory of His Name should receive fulfilment through the deed [which was to be wrought]. And although it was deep night,<sup>1</sup> and he was held fast by forms of the imagination, and the air was cold,

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, late in the night.

and the rain was abundant, and he was exceedingly troubled at that time, yet, besides the mournful outcries of those who were in bitter grief of soul—which were exceedingly abundant—with the secret eye of his mind, and the observant brilliance of his understanding, he looked in a hidden manner with the contemplative vision of his soul, and saw that the guardian angel who clave to the youth was holding Fol. 17 a fast to the members | of his soul, and that he would not permit the fulfilment of his restoration to life to become effected wholly until it should be brought about in very deed by the agency of the blessed man. And this actually took place according to the eternal fore-knowledge [of our Lord] which regardeth the welfare of the children of men. Now between these and these things the blessed man was in great doubt [how to act], for he was afraid to draw nigh openly to the dead body of the youth, and also he was afraid to delay his signs until the break of day when the company of mourners would recognize him; but quickly and speedily his way out of the difficulty became apparent, and it arose from his great poverty and stern self-abnegation.<sup>1</sup> Now Hôrmîzd did not possess any bodily raiment or apparel whatsoever, because he walked nakedly with all his heart in the way of the adorable Gospel, [Page 23] and he turned

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<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, he had stripped himself of his clothes as well as of his other earthly possessions, and went naked; as he was, probably, the only monk who wore no clothes at all in the Monastery, he knew that if he appeared everyone would at once recognize him.

aside from the path of his fathers neither to the right hand nor to the left; and he was exceedingly careful in leading a life of crucifixion to the world lest he should put on himself outwardly the apparel of vain-glory, that is to say, an old and ragged garment which would become a snare of the Crafty One, whilst he himself would remain | naked and without the glorious <sup>Fol. 17 b</sup> covering of the apparel of Christ. But he contrived a means of avoiding the net of the Enemy that he might be neither caught within it nor entangled in the meshes thereof—for the Devil is a cunning hawk—and so be drawn quickly and speedily into his den. Then straightway the blessed man ran into the Monastery while it was yet night, and having come to the place where was the apparel of the steward of the Monastery, he took from himself (*literally*, his neck) his own outer garment, and put on the tunic of the steward of the Monastery ; and instead of his own wretched cloak he arrayed himself in the glorious garment of the steward, and thus apparelled he went forth from the Monastery.

And it came to pass that whilst the company of mourners was weeping and making lamentation for their dead, the vision of the blessed man burst upon them, and they knew not who he was or whose son he might be; and he asked them questions like one who was unacquainted with [the reason of] their sorrows. Now they thought that he was either a bishop or one of the chief men of the Monastery, and in their pain and sorrow they answered and said unto him, "What then? Thou must be a

Fol. 18 a "stranger," and the only one of | this Monastery, who "doth not know and is not acquainted with the bitter affliction which our son hath endured from the wicked devil that hath contended with him by night and "by day. Behold, it is now thirty days since we "brought him [hither] in the hope of his being cured "of the wicked devil which was living in him, but "he choked and died this evening at sunset;" and they were all weeping in bitter pain. Then [the blessed man] made them to be quiet, and said, "O ye strangers, I entreat you not to weep, for the youth is "not dead but living; depart ye from [Page 24] my "presence for a little, for his soul is still in him, and "it hath not left him." And by reason of this joyful news they hearkened unto him, and they ceased from their weeping and separated themselves from him for a little. Then the blessed man with tears in his eyes, and with intense pain on their behalf in his heart, made with his hand three times in the air the sign of the Cross, and said, "O our Lord Jesus Christ, "the Hope of Thy Church, during Thy human dispensation, which was on our behalf: Thou didst re-store to life the daughter of Jairus, the Chief of the

Fol. 18 b "synagogue; and didst give life | also to the son of "the widow; and didst raise up from the grave Lazarus, who had been dead four days; Thou art at "this present the Living One, and the Son of the "Living One, and for Thy Godhead nothing is too

<sup>1</sup> The meaning of the text is, Is it possible that thou coming from this Monastery art ignorant of the bitter affliction which, etc. If thou art, thou must be a stranger, for thou art the only man that doth not know of it.

“difficult, and Thy Will subsisteth with the Will of “Thy Father in Thy creative power. O our Lord, “Thou didst say unto Thy disciples in Thy Holy “Gospel, Ask, and it shall be given unto you, and “whatsoever ye shall ask My Father in My Name on “earth shall be given unto you from My Father Who “is in heaven;” open Thou the door unto the voice “of the lamentation of these strangers, and accept “the feebleness of me Thy servant, and lift Thou up “the gates of Thy Holy Church, and exalt Thou on “high the boasting of Her that hath been brought “low, by causing the soul of this youth to return “unto life; and also let Thy Holy Name be glorified “in the sight of those who have hated to Thy Holy “Church.” And when he had finished his prayer, and had said ‘Amen’, he cried unto the youth with his voice three times, and said, “John, John, in the Name “of Jesus Christ, rise up from the sleep of death”; and at these words, which [were said] unto <sup>Fol. 19 a</sup> | him, the youth straightway opened his eyes and began to speak confusedly, and he asked for water and drank. And he ascribed glory unto Christ twice, saying, “Glory “[be] unto Thee Who hast given unto me life anew, “and Who hast also by Thy grace set me free from “the baleful might of that wicked devil”.

Now when the Satan, who had formerly dwelt in the youth and had made his habitation therein, saw [Page 25] that he had returned to life, and that he had been raised up from the dead and was alive, he cried out and spake in the Persian tongue, say-

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<sup>1</sup> St. John XV. 7, 16.

ing, "Glory be unto that splendour of Christ which "hath built for me a house anew, and hath not left "me [to become] a wanderer and a stranger like my "companions ; yea, the good Providence of the Most "High, which is in all things, hath wrought according "to Its desire." And when the [kins] folk of the youth heard the voice of the Subtle One again they were perturbed at the sound of the speech of the Crafty One, and also the blessed man himself was greatly in fear of [that] devil lest he should expose him in the sight of those people and should know who he was, and lest he should become unto him a goad in this matter, and destroy his labours, and make him to become Fol. 19 b superfluous to his spiritual courses;<sup>1</sup> | and the blessed man prayed with holy anxiety that [Christ] would make the Crafty One to have no effect upon either the youth or himself. And when the holy man had received upon himself power from on high, he turned to that crafty devil, and spake with him in the Persian tongue, and said unto him, "O evil and wicked "devil, who from the most remote period of thine "existence hast never felt shame and who to the end "of time and to all eternity wilt never feel shame, by "Jesus Christ the Nazarene, Who drove out thy le- "gion from him that used to dwell among the tombs, "be thou silent, and hold thy peace, and utter no "words, and expose me not, for I am a sinful man "and have need of mercy." Then the devil, who hearkened unto the humble words of the glorious

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, if he should be discovered people would praise him, and all his labours in the spiritual life would not avail in saving him from what he was most anxious to avoid.

man, was constrained by the command to him of the holy man, and by the might of the angel who had been sent to his help, and through the holy splendour of Jesus Christ, he answered with murmurs, and said, "Hearken, O thou man, who art cunning in the business of thy Lord, although thou hast contrived a scheme craftily against the prince [of devils], and against death, who is my yoke-fellow, by means of 'the mighty Sign' of thy humility of the pure things which appertain thereunto, thou hast not overcome 'the two mighty ones';" and after these words that <sup>Fol. 20 a</sup> devil spake no more. Then the blessed man made a washing of the cross which was on him, and gave [Page 26] thereof unto the young man to drink, and when the youth who had been raised from the dead had drunk it, the holy man signed him with the sign of the Cross three times in the Name of Jesus Christ; and the holy man departed from the youth who had not recognized who he was. And the blessed man returned to his fellow monks and sent back the apparel of the steward which he had taken, and concealed his glory, and then he went and lay down to sleep again with his fellow monks.

And as soon as it was light and when the day had come, the [rumour of the] splendid deed of the raising of the youth from the dead spread abroad in that holy Monastery. Now in the heart of each of the monks sorrow had tarried the whole night through for the death of the youth, and every member of that holy congregation was prepared to go to his funeral

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, the Cross.

as soon as the morning should come ; yet behold, they received the person of the young man who had been dead with joy, and instead of being dead he was alive. But mingled with the gladness there was much asking of questions by them, and the congre-  
Fol. 20 *b* gation enquired | of its fathers and spake to them concerning the matter of the man whom they knew not, yet about whom each one of them was saying the same thing. But who could bring into his mind that this thing had been performed by Divine agency? Glory be unto Thee, O our Lord, for this wonderful thing was not done contrary to Thy Will. And they said, "The angel of the Lord hath again come "down" [upon earth].

Now Satan was exceedingly wroth and was filled with hot anger at all this perfection which had been made perfect in the holy man, and he was very wishful and desirous to fulfil his will in him, but whenever the rebel drew nigh to wage war against him he only sustained defeat in his own person, because the holy man was girded about with the fair garment of the invincible armour of upright and simple humility, which is the apparel which overcometh the devils, and causeth those who possess it [Page 27] to gain a crown. And whither can the humble man fall since he hath set himself below every man? In this garb our Lord arrayed Himself when He went down  
Fol. 21 *a* into the strife and contest against | Satan, and Satan found himself to be vanquished in the combat with Him, and he and [all] his host received misery and woe, and [our Lord] removed from him three crowns of victory. Therefore, [O Satan,] henceforth and for

ever thou shalt never have dominion over the host of the children of righteous men!

And three nights after these things had been accomplished in the holy man by Divine agency, while the blessed man was in prayer and holding converse with God, at midnight there burst upon him suddenly a horde of devils, and they used menaces and threats against the holy man, and they fell upon him without mercy and beat him with exceedingly severe blows: and they left him lying in a miserable plight with only a small breath of life remaining in him, and then they departed from him. Now he was lying in a small cell in the buildings of the Monastery, and not one of his fellow coenobites knew of the things which had been done to him by the devils. But our Lord, Who was a spectator of the strife of the athlete, was not unmindful of His servant, and He sent to his help one of His spiritual | ambassadors, who took him by his <sup>Fol. 21 b</sup> right hand, and set him upon his feet, and said unto him, “[I have come] because thy Lord was a spectator of thy strife, and [because] thou hast still to contend for a little against wicked spirits; but later thou shalt have happiness after the manner of the spirit “with great glory”; and having said these words the being of the spirit departed from his side, and immediately he felt relief from the pain of the blows. Now the devils used to inflict tortures upon him the whole night long secretly in his cell, and in the daytime he used to work openly in the Monastery with his fellow monks; yet even in the daytime Satan used to be in wait for him, [Page 28] that, peradventure, he might be able to trip him up and to

make him to entangle his feet in one of the many snares of his nets. For this is the custom of the Crafty One: whensoever he hath knowledge of a man who hath received a gift from God, his anger becometh unbearable [to him], and he burneth with envy against him, and stirreth up war against him, so that he may be able to put away from him that gift and to plunder him of it. [And our Lord saith,] “Behold, Satan seeketh to sift you like wheat, but “I have entreated My Father that your faith may

Fol. 22 a “not be diminished”.<sup>1</sup> | And again, Peter the Apostle said, “Keep yourselves awake, and pray, for your “Enemy, Satan, roareth like a lion and goeth about, “and seeketh whom he may devour.”<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, even after Satan had been vanquished many times by the Divine power which dwelt in the blessed man, he was neither wearied nor ashamed of the fight which he waged against him; but he was continually devising new plans and weaving crafty plots according to his wont, and he was summoning his hosts to do battle with him, and he made ready his faithful ones to contend against the righteous man, saying, “O ye hosts, ye children of my right hand, help me “[against] this man who is the opponent of our host “in every thing. And ye know, O my warriors, that “he despiseth our ranks and maketh a mock at our “hosts; and he waggeth his head in derision at us, “and shooteth out his lips in contempt at our assem-“blies, and what is far worse for us than all these

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke XXII. 31, 32.

<sup>2</sup> I St. Peter V. 8.

“things, he doth not consider us of any moment what-  
“soever in this world. Now, we have been beings of  
“might from the beginning of the world unto this  
“present, and we have brought the world into a state  
“of subjection so that we might live therein, and in  
“all the generations of the world we have slain and  
“cast down upon the earth thousands, and tens of  
“thousands | of just and righteous men by means of Fol. 22 b  
“the crafty schemes of our weapons; and yet this man  
“laugheth at us and maketh us to be afraid, and he  
“hath stiffened his neck against us that he may be  
“able to vanquish us. Therefore we must act cun-  
“ningly with this man that, peradventure, we may be  
“able to cast him down in shame, lest his fighting  
“against us wax strong, [Page 29] and he rebel against  
“us and make us to be a laughingstock, and treat  
“our host with contempt.”

Then the devils began to wage war of a different kind against him, for they used to come against him by night in the loathsome and hideous forms of all manner of destructive wild beasts, and of reptiles, and dragons, and huge serpents which shot forth the venom of death, that they might frighten him with trembling and terror, so that he might become distracted and horror-stricken, and might look at them, and thus they might be able to lead captive his mind. But even with this new and cunning trick which they had schemed against the wonderful man the evil ones went forth from the array of their contest defeated, for the blessed man had, according to his mighty wont, cut asunder the nets of their snares, and laughed at their hosts, and made his voice to be heard in their

assemblies, and defeated them like a mighty man of war, and brought them low by means of his mild and  
 Fol. 23 a peaceful humility. | Now although the devils were again vanquished by the help of the grace of our Lord, at night time they again brought back upon the blessed man the bow of war, and they began to cast arrows in secret at him that was perfect in his goings, that, peradventure, his mind might be too much distracted and disturbed by fear to arm himself to fight against them with the shield of the faith of Christ. And the combat which the devils made against him was so exceedingly strong, that by reason of the sight of these fearful phantoms his life was destroyed in his body, and his heart also fell down upon him,<sup>1</sup> and he became like a dead man; and had it not been for the mercy of Christ, Who is never unmindful of His athletes who lift up their gaze to His help during every breath of their lives, his soul would have departed from his body through terror. O how mighty and fierce is the fight which the devils make against holy men, for they wage war mercilessly against the saints and athletes of our Lord by means of violent attacks which can hardly be borne!

[Page 30] Then the devils began a new kind of war [against the blessed man], for they sowed within him  
 Fol. 23 b thoughts of | pride and of boastfulness that, peradventure, by this cunning plan they might be able to ensnare him, and he might fall under their condemnation,<sup>2</sup> and they might make him a [scene] for

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, his courage collapsed.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, the same condemnation as themselves.

visions and an abode for their songs, and then they would easily be able to steal from him the gift which had been given unto him by God, that is to say, the humility which overcometh devils, and then the downfall of the valiant man would be an easy matter for them [to effect]. Such were the crafty schemes which the devils were devising against the wonderful man, and the Crafty One wished that he might be caught in this snare, so that peradventure they might be able to make feeble his strenuousness and vigorous strength in such wise that he might not wax strong and rebel against them, and that, the blessed man having been caught in [their] snares, they might be able to lift up the heel against him, and might laugh at him and make a mock at him, saying, “*Îhî, Îhî, our eye hath seen him*”!<sup>1</sup> But the prey never cometh in the way of the crafty man, for the snare which they dug they shall fill with their persons (*or, statures*), and the pit which they hid shall become [their own] portion of destruction.

## CHAPTER VI.

Of the wonderful things which he wrought, and how he turned water into olive oil.

Now a few days after [these things] Rabban, the head of the Monastery, called the blessed man, and said | unto him, “Take this money, and get thee unto Fol. 24 a one of the cities in our neighbourhood, and buy “us a little oil for use in the sacristy and for the

<sup>1</sup> Psalm XXXV. 21.

“need[s] of the brethren.” And inasmuch as the obedience and lowliness of the blessed man surpassed the measure of [all] the meek (*or*, humble), who were in his time, he offered ready submission unto Rabban, and hearkened unto the command of the master; and he took two of his fellow monks with him, and goods, and money, and they departed on their journey towards the city of the Ma'alléthâyê,<sup>1</sup> whereunto they were going. And they were obliged to pass the night all together in a church, and they found [Page 31] therein an assembly of seven and twenty poor folk who had been shut up in the church as prisoners by the Governor because [they had not paid] the poll tax, and they were very evilly entreated at the hands of the Governor of the country. And when our Rabban saw that those poor folk were in great tribulation, and that they were persecuted by the Governor on account of the true faith,<sup>2</sup> he decided in his faithful mind, which was full of mercy and was overflowing with divine compassion, saying,

Fol. 24 b “It is better to rescue [these] | poor folk who have “been made prisoners for the true faith [than to buy “oil]”, and he said within his holy self, “For the sake “of Christ I will redeem the people of Christ, and I “will put my hope in Him, for He knoweth what is

<sup>1</sup> The city of Ma'alléthâ, *i. e.*, معلنايا was situated about one hour's distance from Dehök, a place about thirty-five or forty miles north of Mâwsel. It was one of the twelve dioceses under the Ma-phrian of Tekrit, and is often mentioned together with Hénâithâ. See Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, p. 238: and my *Book of Governors*, vol. II. pp. 238, 239.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, the governor of the city was either a Muhammadan or a Jacobite, and the seven and twenty men were Nestorians.

“required by me and by the holy fathers who have “sent me on this journey before we can ask Him.” Now he acted with exceedingly great wisdom in respect of the divine merchandize (*or*, business), for he was afraid of the devil of boasting and of [spiritual] exaltation, lest he should fall under the condemnation of Satan and [so] destroy his own divine labours; for however much treasure there is hidden in the earth, it is under guard. And moreover, this blessed man was anxious not to work quickly and speedily a deed of excellence before the eyes of fleshly sight, but [only] before the Father of lights, even as it is written in the Book of Life, the adorable Gospel, “When thou prayest, go into thy closet, and shut the “door on thyself, and pray to thy Father in secret, “and thy Father Who seeth in secret shall reward “thee openly.”<sup>1</sup> And he was greatly, and in no small degree, <sup>Fol. 25 a</sup> afraid of falling into the hands of the devil of vain-glory<sup>2</sup> [whereby he would lose the opportunity of] bringing forth spiritual fruit in abundance: for all the labours of the life of ascetic excellence are placed under the fear of this devil, [Page 32] and for this reason all the works of excellence of the blessed man were wrought with wisdom. So thus wishing to redeem those prisoners he took the money which was with him, and he gave it unto those who were imprisoned for the true faith, and said unto them, “O my beloved, take ye this money, and re-deem yourselves from the hands of the wicked Go-

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew VI. 6.

<sup>2</sup> A gap occurs in the text here.



“vernōr, and ye shall not destroy<sup>1</sup> your true faith  
 “which is in Christ and which He acquired by His  
 “precious blood which [was shed] on Golgotha. Take  
 “this money, and pray for me, for I am in need of  
 “your prayers.” Then those men received the money  
 from the hands of the holy man, that is to say,  
 three hundred and fifty pieces of silver,<sup>2</sup> and thus  
 seven and twenty souls were redeemed by him.

And the blessed man removed himself from their  
 midst, and drew nigh unto his companions, and said  
 Fol. 25 b unto them, “Forgive ye me, | O my fathers, in a  
 “matter which concerneth the mission of the journey  
 “upon which we have been sent by Rabban. I have  
 “heard from men who repeat and say such things  
 “that there is fine oil [to be obtained] either in the  
 “city of Mâwsel<sup>3</sup> or in the city of Bâlâdh,<sup>4</sup> I forget  
 “[which]. But I counsel you, my beloved, that ye  
 “each<sup>5</sup> go and bring unto us news concerning the  
 “oil which can be obtained in these cities, and unto  
 “the city, the measure of [the] excellence [of the oil  
 “[of] which shall exceed that of its fellow, we will  
 “direct our course, for the sake of the advantage of

<sup>1</sup> Or, lose.

<sup>2</sup> The coin was probably the *zûzâ*, and in value about sixpence.

<sup>3</sup> It seems to follow from the narrative that the nearest town to the Monastery of Rabban Bar-’Idtâ was Ma’alléthâ, and it is pretty clear that the Monastery lay at no great distance from it. From Ma’alléthâ to Mâwsel was a journey of thirty-five to forty miles, and from Ma’alléthâ to Bâlâdh it was little more than twenty miles, but the road was a very bad one, and lay across rough mountains until the flat plain on the east bank of the river was reached.

<sup>4</sup> Bâlâdh or Eski-Mâwsel lies on the east bank of the Tigris about forty miles above Mâwsel.

<sup>5</sup> *I. e.*, one of you go to Mâwsel, and the other to Bâlâdh.

“the whole community of the brethren.” And when his companions the coenobites heard these things from him, without delay and without hesitation they made their way according to the command which they had received from Rabban, for his command was as weighty in their sight as the command of an Angel.

Now when the monks had departed a little way from the blessed man he turned his face towards the animals<sup>1</sup> which were with him, and he took them and led them outside the city of Ma’alléthâyê in the early dawn, when it was still dark. And he found on the bank of the river a part of the city which was hidden, and secret, and concealed from the place where the people | walked, [Page 33] and there he tied up Fol. 26 a the animals<sup>1</sup> which he had with him. Then he turned his face to the East, and prayed, saying, “O our “Lord Jesus Christ, the mighty Hope of Thy Church, “and the Boast of Christian peoples, Thou mighty “Refuge of him that calleth upon Thy Name, Thou “rest-giving Haven of all strangers and humble folk; “Thou, O Lord, in Thy Divine dispensation didst at “the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee change water “into wine, and, besides, Thou didst satisfy innumerable thousands of people with bread which Thy Will “made to be abundant. Thou, O Lord, didst make “the promise in Thy Life-giving Gospel unto Thy “blessed disciples, and didst say unto them, ‘If two “of you shall be of one mind<sup>2</sup> on earth concerning “every thing for which they shall ask, it shall be given

<sup>1</sup> **κλητοί** means literally “possession”, but it is quite clear that **κλητοί** means flocks and herds as well as household goods.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, “shall be equal”.

“unto them from My Father Who is in heaven. And “your Father Who is in heaven knoweth of what ye “are in need before ye ask Him.’<sup>1</sup> By these words “[also] in Thy Holy Gospel Thou hast stirred us up “to make petitions unto Thee, according to Thy holy “commandment unto Thy disciples, ‘Seek and ye shall “find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you.’<sup>2</sup> “Thou Thyself knowest what is in the hearts of all “men, and that although I have committed my soul “unto Thee with all my heart, I have not performed  
 Fol. 26 b “[any] service | before Thee, not even for a single “moment<sup>3</sup> according to Thy Will, but [I have hope] “that Thou wilt receive favourably my sinful acts. “And Thou hast put them away, and hast most merci- “fully cast them behind Thy back, and by Thy grace “Thou hast made them to possess boldness of speech “to such a degree that they may seek from Thee the “things which, though too mighty for our nature, be- “long unto Thee naturally, and have been throughout “all the generations of the world under Thy direct- “ing care and providential guidance eternally. Give “me, O Lord, water in secret, but let it appear to “be oil outwardly, for the sake of Thy sweet love, “that Thy Holy Name may be glorified in Thy Holy “Church, now, and always, and for ever and ever. “Amen.”

And when the prayer of the holy man had come to an end, he took the skin bottles from the pack-saddles and began to fill them with water in the

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew XVIII. 19; VI. 8.

<sup>2</sup> St. Matthew VII. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Or, hour.

Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, [Page 34] and in hope in His words which give confidence and in His promises which have never proved to be untrue. And Satan prevented him from pouring water into the bottles, saying, "I will not let thee pour water into "the bottles of the monks, for I would shew compassion on the bottles that they may not be rent in "pieces and destroyed; but depart thou from their "habitation so that they may be prosperous in their "labours, and may increase sevenfold.<sup>1</sup> | And I will fol. 27 a not allow thee to perform thy will and that which "is in thy heart." Now when the holy man saw that Satan would not allow him to pour the water into the bottles, he besought the Lord to make of no effect his crafty plans by means of his own upright actions, and behold, there suddenly appeared to help him a holy angel, and by means of the compulsion of the angel who had come to the assistance of the holy man, Satan himself filled the bottles with water from the river. And when Satan had filled all the bottles with water, the Lord made a desire for his fellow coenobites to be perceptible in the mind of the holy man, and he prayed to his Lord for [the presence of] his companions on the journey who lived with him in the monastery. Then according to the Divine agency which cleaveth unto those who love it, and which ministereth unto them, when as yet his companions had not departed from him a distance of two or three stages, suddenly the holy angel appeared before them in the form of the holy man

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "and they shall come before them one in seven".

Rabban Hôrmîzd, and said unto them, "Come ye, O  
 "my beloved, with me, for I have bought oil, and  
 "have filled the skins therewith according to your de-  
 "sire." And the angel walked in front of them and  
 they followed swiftly after him, and by the Divine  
 Fol. 27 b | agency they arrived at the place where the holy  
 man was standing with his loads [of oil], and the  
 shadow of him that called them was united unto the  
 stature of the holy man, and the monks thought that  
 it was he who had called them, and had walked be-  
 fore them, but by reason of their joy which clung  
 unto the love of their companion, it never entered  
 into their [Page 35] minds [to think] how, and in what  
 manner the skins had been suddenly filled with oil.  
 Now the blessed man had drawn seven loads of oil  
 from the waters of the river. And singing psalms and  
 praying the holy man journeyed on his way, saying,  
 "O God, Thou alone art He Who doeth wonderful  
 "things: O Lord, shew us Thy way, and I will walk  
 "[therein] in the truth."

And it came to pass after one day more they ar-  
 rived at the Monastery, and they set down their  
 burdens from the animals, and the brethren perceiv-  
 ed that the oil was good, and of the finest quality,  
 and they ascribed praise unto him that had brought  
 it. Now this was another great [and] wonderful thing  
 which Christ wrought by the agency of the holy  
 man, for this saint was wise and understanding in  
 this spiritual business.<sup>1</sup> "If ye have faith in you, and  
 "have not doubt, ye shall say unto this mountain,

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, trafficking in spiritual things.

“Depart hence’, and it shall depart, | and nothing <sup>Fol. 28 a</sup> shall be too difficult for you.”<sup>1</sup> For every man who is by Grace esteemed worthy of the gift of the Holy Spirit sheweth forth the operations thereof in many ways. Some work mighty deeds and signs and wonders; and others again extinguish the powers of fire; and unto some the Holy Spirit giveth the [power] to walk swiftly upon the fluid nature of water; and unto others the gifts [of knowing] even the mysteries of the things which are about to take place in the new world. On some He maketh [the gift of] prophecy to descend, and on others the understanding<sup>2</sup> of the Spirit; unto some [He giveth the power] to raise the dead, and unto others the dominion over evil spirits. And again, by their prayers, some have given children unto barren women. “Whosoever believeth on Me”, according to what the Scriptures say, “rivers of living water shall flow forth from his belly.”<sup>3</sup> And, inasmuch as He speaketh of “living water”, He maketh us to know clearly concerning the gift of the Holy Spirit which shall be given unto him that is worthy to receive it. Now the Spirit of Holiness which worketh is one, yet it is given unto each one in the Spirit; and although multitudes of different ways are adopted by Grace [in its bestowal], yet [Page 36] all those who are esteemed worthy | of this gracious gift from <sup>Fol. 28 b</sup> the Father of lights drink from one and the same fountain. For to him unto whom this gift of the Holy Spirit hath been given from heaven [shall it be] ac-

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew XVII. 20.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, power of discernment.

<sup>3</sup> St. John VII. 38.

cording to the word of the divine Paul [which saith], “We are all one body in Christ.”<sup>1</sup> Now our Lord Christ is the Head<sup>2</sup> of the whole Church, and we all are members, each in his proper place, and our Lord is King over the whole body; and as the understanding is the king of the soul, even so the power of life is carried unto each one of the members for use [in time of] its need. And the Divine help hath flowed into all the inmost parts of the Church from the Head of our life, Jesus Christ, Who maketh His athletes to triumph.

Now when the blessed man had gone into the common building of the Monastery unto his companions, [he found that] they were making jests with Rabban, and saying unto him, “Peradventure Rabban Hôrmîzd hath bought this oil in the Paradise “of the Eden of Delight, for it possesseth marvellous “taste, and colour, and smell.” But the blessed man himself, in the simple humility which was filling his soul, made answer unto them with words which [arose from] the lowliness of his mind, saying, “O my fathers, Fol. 29 a “I am skilled neither | in buying nor selling, but in “the innocence of my heart I drew nigh unto the “seller of the oil, and the money which ye did send “with me I gave unto him, and he measured the oil “and gave [it] unto me; and as for the praises which “ye are giving to this oil it is right that [your] praise “and approval should be [bestowed upon] it, for it “hath been made perfect by your prayers. I, like a

<sup>1</sup> Romans XII. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, “in the form of the Head of the whole of His Church”.

“useless servant, [only] rendered obedience unto you, “and we owe, therefore, praises unto your prayers, “and it was through the help which arose from them “that the Lord made my way to prosper.” Now, notwithstanding all these divine triumphs which were wrought by his means, the blessed man became more and more humble, and nearer and still nearer did he draw nigh unto divine things.

[Page 37] And moreover, during the time when Rabban Hôrmîzd was still serving in the Monastery in the subjection which cometh from [service] therein, there came unto that holy Monastery Mâr Sylvanus, Bishop of Mount Kardô,<sup>1</sup> on one business or another which had called him there. Now because this man Sylvanus was a famous man, and merited remembrance for good,—moreover, by reason of the purity and simplicity of his mind the history of his triumphs is written in the letters of life—he was esteemed by his Lord to be worthy of divine revelations | at all sea- Fol. 29 b sons, and by the agency of Divine Providence was he guided in his daily life. And when the holy man Mâr Sylvanus had remained there three days, he took up his abode in a cell which was nigh unto the common building of the Monastery. And it came to pass [one night], after he had ended the first section<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, Jabal al-Jûdî of the Arabs, on the left bank of the Tigris, over against Jazîrat ibn-‘Omar.

<sup>2</sup> *καθημα*, literally “session”. The Psalms appointed to be read in the Nestorian ritual are divided into twenty *καθημα*, which are called *καθισμα*. Mr. Badger gives a full account of the sessions or *kathismata* in his *Nestorians and their Rituals*, vol. II. 21, 282, etc.

of the Psalms which are sung after supper,<sup>1</sup> and the reader had sat down to read the commentary on the book of Genesis to the brethren, that the mind of the holy man Mâr Sylvanus was seized and carried away by the contemplation of divine things, during which there were revealed unto him the mysteries and the things which were about to take place in the new world. And he also learned with his understanding divine and hidden mysteries, and he also saw with the eye which was illumined [by the Spirit] the beings of the house of Enoch and Elijah,<sup>2</sup> and all the righteous men who have lived beneath the heavens; and the deeds and life also of our Rabban were not hidden from him, nor the various qualifications of his capacity, nor the boldness of speech which he possessed with Christ. And when his mind had tarried for a time in those regions of spiritual beings, and he had enjoyed the happiness thereof with heavenly contemplations, it returned to him, and his understanding abode with him again, and he obtained knowledge of all the mysteries and hidden things which he had learned from the | friends of Christ through the Spirit, Who made him wise.

Fol. 30 a Then the blessed Sylvanus desired to seek out our Rabban, and to be blessed by him, and to learn his ways face to face, but the divine mercy prevented him from doing this; and when it had become [Page 38] day, he again wished to go into the common building of the Monastery, to see Rabban, and to be

<sup>1</sup> ~~καταπληκτικόν~~ = *completorium*.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, the company or companions of Enoch and Elijah.

blessed by him, but the Spirit of Jesus persuaded him [not to do this]. And when the time had come to begin [the service of] the Holy Mysteries, he commanded the sacristan of the Monastery to take [the hammer] and to beat the board to [announce this] to the brethren; and when he had beaten the board for the second *marmithâ*,<sup>1</sup> and had begun to finish that which referreth to the Trinity, the board which was beaten fell from his shoulders, and his soul became silent within him, and his thoughts and mind were seized and carried away by the vision of the Holy Trinity.<sup>2</sup> And upon the holy man Mâr Sylvanus himself alighted this gift, and in one moment they were enjoying themselves together in the constitution of that new world, and of the good things thereof which never come to an end; and they remained in this state of stupefaction, which was beyond compare, for about three hours, and then they came to themselves. And each of them learned what | had Fol. 30 b

been revealed unto him by the mercy of Jesus, and the two men became companions, each of the other, in that perfect and divine love wherein they were about to live in the new world of the Son of God. Now, our holy men were, henceforward, from time to time, that is to say, at all hours, sojourning each in his happiness as long as they were living their

<sup>1</sup> The Psalter is divided into fifteen **كُلُّوَنَات**, and each **كُلُّوَنَات** into four **كُوَنَات**, and each **كُوَنَات** into three or four Psalms.

<sup>2</sup> It would seem from the text as if Rabban Hôrmîzd was holding the board.

mortal lives,<sup>1</sup> even as [this] thing was done at that time for these two men, who had been consecrated with our oil.

And when the holy man Mâr Sylvanus had learned of our Rabban by the Holy Spirit, he went up to the common building of the Monastery where he was; and as soon as Rabban had learned of his coming up thither to him, by means of the Holy Spirit Who made him wise, he withdrew himself before he came there, and hid himself for a little in the portion of the Monastery where the monks his companions lived together, lest quickly and speedily he should be wounded by the poisoned arrow of vainglory, and should be impeded in the course of his journey which was perfect in God. Now, he hated greatly this devil, and the war [with him], and his temptation[s], for he well knew concerning him from the doctrine of the holy fathers, and that in this war  
 Fol. 31 a of vainglory [Page 39] | many of the great fathers had been entangled and that they had stumbled and fallen, and had become superfluities unto their monasteries.<sup>2</sup> Therefore Rabban also was greatly afraid of this temptation, for none of the ascetics who had been taken in this snare ever escaped very quickly from the diverse crooked snares of this crafty hawk, and from the thorny plant with two and twenty heads. O thou merchant who art filled with the things of spiritual wisdom, who hast crushed the head of the dragon of the mind, that is to say, vainglory, thou

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, as long as each lived his mind was carried away in this manner at intervals.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, they had abandoned their monasteries.

hast built up between him and thee the fence of thy humility, and the son of the wall<sup>1</sup> of thy lowliness.

And when Mâr Sylvanus the Bishop perceived that Rabban had withdrawn himself from the common building on account of him,—now he had observed the plan which he had learned from the blessed man —he sought him out, following in his footsteps, and overtook him on the eastern side of that holy Monastery, where they embraced each other with holy kisses, and they prayed and sat down to hold converse together with edifying and spiritual words. And after an hour [spent in] converse [concerning] the world of judgment, they also began to speak with new tongues concerning the new and glorious world. Fol. 31 b And in accordance with the Divine Providence which regardeth all things, suddenly the two of them became involved in the contemplation of things which are, and of corporeal and of incorporeal [beings], and they were examining into the refined and spiritualized intelligences, and into the secret things and hidden mysteries which were revealed unto them there by the mercy of Jesus; and then their thoughts took up their abode in them again, and their understanding returned to its wonted condition. And there they made new their faithful (*or*, believing) minds, which were remote from the doubt which setteth itself in opposition [to faith], and the cunning thoughts of the children of men; then the holy man Mâr Sylvanus set out and departed unto his own country, car-

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, the low bank which is built up in front of the main walls of a building to form a kind of defensive outwork; in the case of Rabban his humility was the main wall, and his lowliness the *glacis*.

rying with him in his holy soul [Page 40] the thought of the holy love of Rabban Hôrmîzd, [and the wonder] how it was that such a glorious light as this was to be found among created beings.

Now therefore, by the Divine agency, and by the help of the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, Rabban, the head of the Monastery, called him (*i. e.*, Hôrmîzd), and said unto him, “Is not the service which “thou hast served with the other monks in the Mon-  
Fol. 32 a astery sufficient for thee? For behold, thou hast al-  
“ready served for seven years in the common build-  
“ing.” And Rabban received the counsel of that holy  
head, and armed himself | with prayers secretly, and  
went forth from the common building, and from the  
service thereof, and took up his abode in a cell by  
himself; and he began to exchange the ascetic labours  
of the body for the cultivation of the mind, be-  
cause he had found the carefully guarded seclusion and  
peace, which from the beginning of his discipleship  
and from his youth up he had earnestly desired.  
And he began forthwith to gird up his loins with  
the word of truth, and to put on his holy mind the  
breastplate of righteousness, and he shod his feet  
with the preparation of the adorable Gospel, and he  
armed himself with the buckler of Apostolic faith,  
and he set the sword of the Holy Spirit at his side  
like a mighty man of war; and he began to extin-  
guish the burning darts of the Evil One, and he be-  
gan to bear upon his shoulder his cross, even as he  
had been commanded, that is to say, the patient en-  
durance of tribulations. He went forth from the Mon-  
astery, and from among the coenobites his compa-

nions, and took up his abode in a cell by himself; he fasted strenuously, ten days at a time, and [he never enjoyed] the rest of sleep by night. He would never allow himself to sleep upon the ground, neither by day nor by night, and [he passed his nights] in chaste and wakeful vigil, and [in praying] sincere prayers, | and [in shedding] sorrowful tears. When- Fol. 32 b ever he was in dire need and was compelled to snatch a little sleep, he used [to do so] resting his side [*or, back*] against one of the walls of his cell, and thus supporting himself he would take only such a portion of his sleep [Page 41] as was necessary for his body, and then turn again to his spiritual business, that is to say, to the continual converse which he held with God, with fasting and frequent prayers by night and by day. And at length, by reason of [his] severe daily labours, his body became poor and emaciated, and his strong body was reduced and became like unto the shadow which passeth away. And by reason of the well-guarded seclusion and tranquillity in which he passed his days and his hours the sight of his eye[s] which belonged unto the senses declined, and the pupils of his eyes became dark, although his soul became young again and again and was renewed in excellence and purity. And it ascended unto such an exalted stage of spirituality and impassible simplicity that he was always exercising his mind and understanding on spiritual things, and at length the whole of him became fired<sup>1</sup> with the Divine fire, and he could see the things

<sup>1</sup> Literally, “the whole of him became fire in fire”.

which were afar off as if they had been near, and the wiles and crafts of evil spirits were being always laid bare before the sight of his eye of the understanding, and by means of the illumined eye of his holy mind he was driving them from the uttermost

Fol. 33 a | bounds of creation.

And Rabban Hôrmîzd remained in that holy Monastery of Rabban Bar-‘Idta for a period of nine and thirty years [and was performing] glorious works, and leading a life of ascetic excellence, which was beyond [ordinary] human nature, and by means of him Christ wrought there many mighty deeds, which are described above. And by the mercy of Christ he was esteemed worthy of those mighty gifts, wherewith the children and the firstborn sons of the Spirit, who have been begotten after the manner of the Spirit, are endowed; for in the mind of Rabban Hôrmîzd there was conceived the spiritual progeny of glorious revelations which [springeth] from that Self-existent One Who is the sovereign of the worlds. And it came to pass one night, whilst this firstborn son was watching with the angels, that his mind was suddenly carried away in contemplation of God, and divine light, which in its [Page 42] brilliant radiance was seven times brighter than the light of the sun which is perceived by the senses, burst forth in his cell, and there was wafted into it a sweet odour, the smell whereof for sweetness surpassed that of all the most choice scents.

Fol. 33 b | Now there lived by the side of Rabban’s cell a certain man whose rule of life and habit was excellent and glorious, and who is worthy of being remembered for good; and his name was Abraham, and

he was an ascetic who lived wholly alone, for he loved a life of ascetic contemplation and rest. And this holy man also saw this wonderful thing which perfection was proclaiming concerning the triumphant deeds of Rabban Hôrmîzd, and he also was participating in the joy of that glorious thing with Rabban; and although he was not doing so in the same degree as Rabban, yet he did so according to the faculty possessed by his mind and by the strength of his rational intelligence. Even thus was Abraham occupying himself in the glory of Rabban and leading a life of ascetic contemplation, and Rabban, with his strenuous mind, was [associated] with him. But, inasmuch as the vision of the mind of Rabban Abraham did [not] burn as brightly, and was not as healthy as that of Rabban Hôrmîzd, he was deprived of [full] spiritual enjoyment and conversation with the blessed man.

And it came to pass that when Rabban Hôrmîzd had remained in this spiritual enjoyment for a space of three hours of the night which I have mentioned, by the grace of our Lord his mind returned | to its Fol. 34 a wakefulness, and his understanding took up its abode with him, and his thoughts and senses returned to consciousness. Then, suddenly, Abbâ Abraham, of whom I have made mention above, knocked at the door of Rabban's cell, and Rabban rose up and opened the door to him; and when Abbâ Abraham had gone in, they sat down [together] for a season, and they discoursed with each other on the matters of ascetic excellence which are useful in the service of and for the edifice of the life of the solitary monk.

And Rabban Hôrmîzd answered and said unto Abraham, "My brother, according to my opinion, we must "depart together from this Monastery"; and the blessed Abraham answered and said unto him, "I have "already lived for a period of thirteen years in the "Monastery of Bêth' 'Âbhê, and I now wish to de- "part from this holy Monastery. And now, [Page 43] "what thou hast said is the will of our Lord, and "[it springeth] from the operation of Divine Grace. "It is not for me to answer thee a word or to trans- "gress what thou hast said; the will is thine, Abbâ, "and [to do] the service of thee is mine".

## CHAPTER VII.

Of the cleaving of the holy man Mâr Abraham of Bêth 'Âbhê to the holy man [Rabban Hôrmîzd].

Now from this time Abbâ Abraham and Rabban Hôrmîzd clave each to the other, and thereupon Abbâ

<sup>1</sup> The Monastery of Bêth 'Âbhê seems to have been situated about twenty miles to the south-east of Al-Kôsh, and to have stood at no great distance from the Upper or Great Zâbh, on its right bank. This important house was built on a mountain peak between two valleys, through one of which flowed the Zâbh, and through the other one of its tributaries; the peak was well wooded, hence the name of the monastery "the house of the forest". Bêth 'Âbhê was founded by Rabban Jacob, who was born at Lâshôm, and who was originally a monk in the Monastery of Mount Îzlâ, about A. D. 595. At first the monks numbered eighty, but about fifty years after they had increased to about three hundred; among them were many famous men, and the monastery enjoyed a great reputation for learning and piety. About the middle of the IX<sup>th</sup> century evil times came upon the society, and the monastery was broken up, partly by the Kurds who plundered it, and

Abraham made it to be a condition with Rabban Hôrmîzd that he should become Rabban's disciple and servant | all the days of his life. And the blessed men remained in that Monastery three months after these words, and, one night, whilst they were still living there in this wise, the conclusion of the revelation which had been made unto Rabban Hôrmîzd formerly was made known unto him by our Lord. Then being certain of the import of the vision, he rose up with earnest purpose and went to Rabban Mâr Yôzâdhâk, that pillar of light and fellow-monk<sup>1</sup> of the blessed man, in order that he might reveal unto him what the Spirit had set in his mouth. And while he was knocking at the door, and was about to go into his presence, Rabban Mâr Yôzâdhâk answered and said unto those who were sitting there with him, that is to say, John the Persian, and Ishô-Sabhran, and Abbâ Adhônâ, and Rabban Shem'ôn, the servant of the blessed man, "My beloved, I believe that Rabban Hôrmîzd is to be a member<sup>2</sup> of our following, and that he will have a portion with us in our departure from this place." Now whilst the[se] word[s] were in his mouth—for so it is related concerning the blessed man, behold, Rabban Hôrmîzd knocked at the door of the cell. And Rabban Yôzâdhâk commanded Rabban Shem'ôn his servant to open the door to him, and when he

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partly by the Government which laid heavy fiscal burdens upon it. The history of the monastery and of its Abbots and others will be found in my *Book of Governors*, London, 1893.

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "son of the sack".

<sup>2</sup> Literally, "son of our following".

Fol. 35 *a* had entered in, | and they had been blessed by each other and had seated themselves, Rabban Yôzâdhâk began to say unto Rabban Hôrmîzd with a smile, "Dost thou desire to live in the desert, O son of "Persians? The Holy Spirit hath already long ago<sup>1</sup> "spoken in this wise unto thee, [Page 44] and this "night hath He completed the matter; rise up then, "O ye my beloved ones, that we may depart unto "the place whereunto His will hath summoned and "called us." And when the night had come, they all rose up together with one purpose and with common agreement, and with one Apostolic love, that they might depart and dwell in the Monastery of Abbâ Abraham of Rîshâ,<sup>2</sup> because it was exceedingly suitable for the cultivation of the life of ascetic contemplation for which they had been earnestly longing a great length of time.

Let the mouths of the reader and of those who hearken [unto him] be sanctified by [the mention of] these beloved names:—The holy man Rabban Mâr Yôzâdhâk, John the Persian, Rabban Mâr Ishô-Sabhran, Rabban Mâr Hôrmîzd, Abbâ Adhônâ, Abbâ Shem'ôn, and Abbâ Abraham, the disciple of the holy man. This holy and divine band, this company of fiery men who were filled with the grace which is in Fol. 35 *b* Christ, with one soul and with one | spirit armed themselves and went forth from among those angelic ranks, and came in a body with the holy angels who were their guides unto this Monastery [of Abbâ Abraham]

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "from the height of days".

<sup>2</sup> The Monastery of Rîshâ is often mentioned in Nestorian literature, but its exact position is unknown.

ham of Rishâ]; and they found it to be suitable for the cultivation of the ascetic life, and there each of them prepared for himself a small place which was only large enough to hold his body, and alone with God they cultivated the service of the holy angels. Now they lived there in the neighbourhood of that Monastery for a period of seven years in one unity of divine purpose, for the believing folk who dwelt in the country of Margâ were taking care of them, and from time to time that which was necessary for the support of their lives was collected by their steward, Rabban Ishô-Sabhran, a man of labours<sup>1</sup> and a shrine of divine humility, who with meek lowliness yoked himself beneath the chariot of the service of these holy fathers. And they toiled the whole week sitting apart each by himself in a place which was secluded, and they neither spoke to nor [Page 45] saw each other until sunset on the Eve of the Sabbath Day, when they gathered themselves together and kept vigil the whole night, and performed a divine and glorious service, and then they partook with re- Fol. 36 a joicing of the Divine Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ, after which each of them returned to his place, and their soul[s] were filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit. And the steward Ishô-Sabhran used to give unto each one of them that which was sufficient for his need for the [whole] week, and he used to bake bread and set it upon the common table, and each of them would then

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, the man of business who looked after the temporal welfare of the monks.

take thereof whatsoever he wished and which was necessary for his use and need. Now their drink came from the great spring (*or*, fountain) which they had there, and Rabban Ishô'-Sabhran used to take an earthenware pitcher, and fill it with water, and carry it and set it before the cells of the blessed men day by day. Whensoever there came unto them a man who was sick, or one who was vexed by Satan, or one suffering from any kind of sickness whatsoever, Rabban Ishô'-Sabhran the steward would bring him unto the holy man Rabban Hôrmîzd, when Rabban would lay his right hand upon him, and our Lord Fol. 36 b would heal him of whatsoever disease | he had. Now Rabban possessed this gift in a more abundant measure than all the [other] fathers who were there, and in a smaller or greater degree his fame went forth into every part of that country.

And a certain man from the city of Bâlâdh' came there, whose eyes had been made blind by the vexing of the Evil One, and he could not see; this man did Ishô'-Sabhran receive into the community, and he gave him relief. And after he had been living with him for a day Ishô'-Sabhran took the blind man and carried him and set him, being blind and sightless, before the cell of Rabban Hôrmîzd, whilst he himself stood opposite; now [Page 46] the coming of the blind man unto him was not hidden from the holy man. First of all he prayed over him, and then he prepared a washing of his cross,<sup>2</sup> and when the blind

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, Eski Mâwsel.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, he prepared a lotion of the water in which he had washed his cross.

man drew nigh unto the door of his cell, with a simple eye which was guileless of fraud and lying hypocrisy he brought forth the water in which he had washed the cross and went out to receive and to meet the blind man. Then he laid his right hand upon his eyes, and said, "O our Lord Jesus Christ, "Who didst open the eyes of Timai, the son of Ti-<sup>Fol. 37 a</sup>  
"mai," and didst light the lamp of our manhood by "the brilliant rays of light of Thy Godhead; O Lord, "Thou didst call Thyself | the 'Light of the world', and  
"Thou art [the Light], and through Thy light, O "Christ, the righteous men who have lived from ge-  
"neration to generation have received light, I have "become Thy servant, and I forget that I am a "sinner. Thy love hath stirred me up to ask Thee for "that which is greater than what I and the fathers "of olden time have [asked before]. O my Lord, Thou "wast with the [fathers] of olden time, and Thou didst "cleave unto those who came after them,<sup>2</sup> and Thou "didst not cease from or have disregard unto the "company [of the fathers] of the last times, be not "Thou then unmindful of me, a sinner, but for the "sake of this man who is blind and who standeth in Thy "presence, have regard unto me, a sinner, who taketh "refuge in Thy Name, that Thy Holy Name may "through me and through him be glorified, now, and "always, and for ever and ever. Amen."

And when he had finished his prayer and had said 'Amen', he laid his fingers upon the eyes of the blind

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, Bartimaeus.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, "the middle ones".

man in the Name of Jesus the Nazarene, and suddenly his eyes were opened and he saw; and Rabban fastened the windows<sup>1</sup> and door of his cell, and he sat down in the restfulness of his soul. Now the [man who had been] blind stood at his door being doubtful in mind as to whether in very truth the light of the world had been seen by him or not, and he was rubbing his eyes thinking that peradventure it was a deceitful vision. Then Rabban Ishô-Sabhran

Fol. 37 b who had been | standing opposite to him saw that the eyes of the blind man were opened, and he drew nigh unto him with rejoicing and with grateful thanks unto our Lord, saying, "Glory be unto Thee, "O our Lord Jesus [Page 47] Christ, Thou beloved "Son, Who hast not crushed out from Thy Church "the salt of excellence, but in all generations hast "established for Thyselv pledges of the redemption "of the children of men, for in this age, which is "wanting in grace, Thou hast placed for us as a "light of brilliant splendour, Rabban Hôrmîzd, through "whom Thou hast in Thy grace this day given light "unto the eyes of this blind man." And the man who had been blind and Ishô-Sabhran departed together glorifying God, and they were marvelling at this wonderful thing.

And again on another occasion they brought unto him a certain man from the village of Margâ who had been bitten by a mad dog; now he was in a most grievous state through the pain, and, behold, by reason of the anguish thereof he was gnawing

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "eyes".

his own flesh with his mouth. He was, moreover, dripping with blood, and he stank horribly by reason of the foul and filthy matter which was running over his body, and he was well nigh out of | his Fol. 38 a mind; he was unable to eat bread or to drink water, and no man dared to draw nigh unto him lest the poison of the disease should straightway fly into another body. Now when the steward Rabban Ishô-Sabhran saw the man's pain (*or*, sickness), he had pity and compassion upon him, and he took him and brought him to the cell of Rabban, and said unto him, "Sit thou here until the holy man cometh forth "to heal thee"; and he removed himself from the place where the man was and took up his stand opposite. Now unto the wonderful old man Rabban Hôrmîzd Christ had revealed concerning that afflicted one, and the blessed man made ready a washing of his cross, and was waiting until peradventure the sick man should fall asleep, when he would then be able to go forth and lay his right hand upon him without his seeing him, and he might be made whole. And having thus waited for a space of three hours, and the pain not permitting the man to fall [Page 48] asleep, the blessed man prayed over him from his cell, and the Lord cast a slumber upon him and he slept. Then the old man went forth from his cell and drew nigh unto him that was smitten (*or*, afflicted), | and he sprinkled over him the water of Fol. 38 b the washing, and said, "O our Lord Jesus Christ, "Thou living Medicine of our miserable race, Thou "Good and Merciful Physician, heal Thou by Thy "grace the sickness of this man, that Thy Holy Name

“may be glorified in Thy Holy Church, Amen.” And Rabban Hôrmîzd left him and went to his cell. Then Rabban Ishô'-Sabhran drew nigh unto the smitten man and called unto him to rise up out of the sickness in which he was lying, whereupon the body of the smitten man was relieved, and he obtained ease and rest from that cruel sickness through the prayers of Rabban Hôrmîzd. And Rabban Ishô'-Sabhran carried him into his own habitation and took care of him for two days, and he was healed wholly.

And again on another occasion they brought there a certain woman from the city of Mâwsel who was wholly covered with leprosy; and when they had brought her up to the cell of the holy man, he was filled with wrath at her kinsfolk, and said unto them, “Why have ye brought a woman unto monks in the “desert? For woman is a snare of Satan unto ascetics, “and [the occasion of] a fall, from which there is no “rising up, unto those who run in this racecourse |

Fol. 39 a “after the manner of the Spirit; ye should not have “dared to bring a woman unto the congregation of “ascetics, for a woman hath no power to enter into “the habitation thereof.” Then the people who brought that woman held their peace and dared not to say a word before the blessed man, but they entreated him to have mercy upon them, and to visit them in his prayers, saying, “We have borne and suffered “the toil of all this journey from the city of Mâwsel “unto thee, and now we are dismissed [Page 49] by “thee without any benefit; accept now our persons, “and forgive thou the folly of thy servants for Thy “Lord’s sake.” Now when the holy man saw the

penitence of their minds, and the humility of their souls he had mercy upon them, and he made a washing of the *h̄enānā* of<sup>1</sup> his cross, and gave [it] unto them that they might anoint the woman and all her body therewith. And as soon as they had done according to what the blessed man had commanded them, and had anointed her body, suddenly she became healed completely of the leprosy which had filled all her body, and all the places which had cast their leprosy became covered with hair. Then her kinsfolk glorified God, and departed to their houses in peace and in great joy.

Fol. 39 b

And the blessed man Rabban Hôrmîzd continued to occupy himself with the matters of his life of contemplation and asceticism, and he served his Lord, and there came upon him a revelation from our Lord concerning a certain shepherd who was pasturing his flock in the mountain. Now, it fell out a certain time on a certain day that this shepherd poured some milk into a basin in which there were sops of bread, that he might eat of the meal which he had made ready, but for one reason or another he was prevented [from eating], and he left the repast which was in the basin uncovered, and rising up from it he departed to carry out the business which called him. And by one of the chances which happen in the world an evil and deadly poisonous snake accidentally fell into the basin, and having shot forth his poison [into it] departed. Now when the shepherd

<sup>1</sup> The ~~h̄enānā~~ was either dust from the body of a saint or martyr, or from some holy place; Rabban mixed a little of it in water wherein he had washed his cross, and gave it to the sick and afflicted.

came to his meal, having stretched forth his right hand, and put [food] into his mouth once or twice, suddenly the poison flew through his body, and he was violently convulsed by the severe pain in his person, and he died straightway. And because that shepherd was a good and merciful man, and was one who led a pure life and was a virgin, our Lord sent a revelation unto Rabban concerning him; and as soon as he had learned about him surely through the divine revelation, Rabban rose up straightway, Fol. 40 a and took his staff in his right hand, and left his cell, and [Page 50] departed. And he was meditating within his holy person, and saying, "Peradventure 'I shall not be able to bear the toil of this long 'journey', for the place where the shepherd lay was at a distance of sixty parasangs from the cell of the holy man. And as he was meditating in this wise within himself, behold, an angel came and stood before him, and by means of the spiritual breath of his lightness he bore Rabban along and set him down by the side of the shepherd, for whose sake he had endured this labour; and he saw that the shepherd was dead, and that there was not a breath of life in him, and that his sheep were scattered abroad on the mountain concerning which a revelation had been made unto him. And the Lord hearkened unto the voice of the prayer of His servant, and the soul of the shepherd came back within him. Then Rabban made a washing of the *hēnānā'* of his cross, and gave thereof to the shepherd to drink,

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 73.

and he anointed his body therewith, and the poison was driven out therefrom by means of the prayers of the holy man. Then the shepherd straightened himself and sat down, being in his right mind, and he was giving thanks and praising the grace of our Lord ; and he related unto Rabban what had befallen him through the poison which he had received from the food, and how his soul had departed from his body in a swift and violent manner. [And he said unto Rabban,] “I make known that I had become “remote from this fleeting life, and I know and am “certain that if the Lord had not sent thee I should “never have come back from the captivity of death, “for I was lying in the depths of the devouring “Sheol. But with what recompense can I reward the “Lord in return for all His acts of grace to me, ex-“cept that I offer my soul as an offering on my be-“half unto Him that hath restored me anew unto “life?” Then he lifted up his eyes and saw his sheep which were separated and scattered upon the tops of those hills, and Rabban made a sign unto him that he should gather together his sheep, so he took his staff in his hand, and went down after his sheep to gather them together. And the angel of the Lord lifted up Rabban, and in one brief moment he bore him back and set him down in his cell.

Now this wonderful thing was not hidden from [Page 51] the eyes of the seraphic watchman Rabban Mâr Yôzâdhâk, for in that same night in which Rabban came from the shepherd the holy man Mâr Yôzâdhâk met him in his spiritual cell, and said unto him, “Blessed art thou, O Rabban Hôrmîzd, for by

“means of thee the shepherd who was poisoned hath  
 “returned to life. It shall happen unto thee that by  
 Fol. 41 a “the mere utterance | of thy name poison shall be  
 “driven forth from its sovereignty, and no mad dog  
 “shall gird at thee in the dominion of the mention  
 “of thy name.” And when that pillar of light Rab-  
 ban Mâr Yôzâdhâk had said these [words] concern-  
 ing him prophetically, he left him straightway, and  
 departed.

Now the beck of the Lord by His will travelleth  
 and journeyeth with His servants, and His everlasting  
 will drew nigh and came, [and ordained] that His  
 athletes should depart from that place of Rabban  
 Abraham of Rîshâ unto another which His will had  
 foreseen. And it came to pass that when the day of  
 the congregation of the First Day of the week had  
 drawn nigh, and these fathers had gathered together  
 thereunto, according to what I have said above, and  
 they had received the Holy Mysteries, and had sat  
 down together in a body to participate with glad-  
 ness in the breaking of the sacramental bread, the  
 steward Rabban Îshô'-Sabhran spake before them,  
 saying, “Ye know, O fathers, that the spring which  
 “we used to have here, the waters whereof used to  
 “flow in great abundance — now water is the [chief]  
 “need of our life in the body — hath through Divine  
 “agency dried up entirely, [and that the place there-  
 “of] hath become even like parched ground through  
 “which water hath never flowed since the days when  
 Fol. 41 b “it was created.” | Then Rabban Hôrmîzd answered  
 and spake before the fathers, saying, “O my holy  
 “fathers, hearken ye unto what I shall say before

“you. As long as the will of the Lord had pleasure  
 “in our congregation which was in this place, this  
 “spring which hath dried up flowed for us all alike;  
 “but now that the Lord hath willed that some of us  
 “should depart from this place, the flow of this  
 “spring is not [sufficient] for us all, but only [Page 52]  
 “for those who shall live and remain here.” And  
 that seraph of flesh and cherub of earth, Rabban  
 Mâr Yôzâdhâk, answered and spake before them,  
 saying, “Even thus saith the Holy Spirit, I Yôzâ-  
 “dhâk, and Abbâ Adhônâ, and Abbâ Shem’ôn, will  
 “go unto Mount Kardô; and Rabban Hôrmîzd and  
 “Abbâ Abraham shall go up unto the Mount of Bêth  
 “Edhrai;’ and Rabban Ishô'-Sabhran and John the  
 “Persian shall bring their days to an end here merit-  
 “oriously, and the spring shall return to its natural  
 “manner. But rise up now, O my beloved, and let  
 “each one of us direct his steps unto the place where  
 “it is pleasing unto the grace of our Lord [for him  
 “to be].” And according to what they had proclaimed  
 beforehand, even so did they; and Rabban  
 Yôzâdhâk first of all gave the salutation of peace  
 unto his companions, | and took away with him Fol. 42 a  
 Abbâ Adhônâ, and Abbâ Shem’ôn; and Rabban  
 Hôrmîzd himself also took with him Abbâ Abraham,  
 and they gave the salutation of peace unto the  
 others.

<sup>1</sup> I. e., Bâ ïdrî, بَ عَذْرَى, a district in the neighbourhood of  
 Ma'althâyâ; see Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, p. 197 ff.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Of the separation of the fathers from each other, and of the coming of Rabban [Hôrmîzd] unto his place.

Now when Rabban Ishô'-Sabhran and John the Persian saw their companions separating from them the parting from their fellows was very grievous unto them; and they all went forth in a body, and accompanied them on their way for a distance of one stage, and they gave each other the salutation of peace a second time amid holy kisses and sorrowful tears, and then they parted from each other, and [went] unto the places which the will of the Lord had ordained for them. Then Rabban Ishô'-Sabhran and John the Persian returned unto their places, according to the prophetical words which the holy man had uttered concerning them, and they turned aside to the spring that they might see what had happened unto it, and as soon as they arrived there they found that [the pool] was full of water to the brim according to its former state. And they rejoiced with an exceedingly great joy, and there, in the Monastery [Page 53] of Rîshâ, they brought to an end the course of their labours in a prosperous manner.

Now Rabban Yôzâdhâk took his companions and went to the mountains of Kardô, and our Rabban Fol. 42 b Mâr | Hôrmîzd took Abbâ Abraham, and they went together to the Mountain of the village of Bêth 'Edhrai; and they found in that mountain a small cave with a rill of water in front of it, and there they took up their abode. Now Abbâ Abraham had

remained only three days there when there came upon them a revelation from our Lord that he should depart from Rabban Hôrmîzd, and should also go to the work which had been set apart for him [to do] by Divine Grace; so Rabban Abraham went forth from that place, and came and founded a monastery for himself in the country of Nineveh, and the rumour of his arrival went forth into all that country.

And the village of believers, Al-Kôsh,<sup>1</sup> was the one which was nigh unto that mountain wherein the holy man Rabban Hôrmîzd had taken up his abode, and the people thereof were the first to go up unto this holy man and to be blessed by him. And by his prayers he delivered them<sup>2</sup> from their diseases and sicknesses, and they rejoiced in him with an exceedingly great joy because God had held their village worthy for Rabban Hôrmîzd to be its neighbour, and a sojourner therein. Then they answered all together and said unto him, "Take up thine abode in "our neighbourhood, O Rabban, | for we love thee, Fol. 43 a  
 "and thine arrival in our district is acceptable unto  
 "us even as that of an angel of God. And if thou  
 "wishes to build a Monastery for thyself the carry-  
 "ing out of the plan and the cost thereof shall be  
 "ours. Behold, we are all thy sons, and men who  
 "are ready to be obedient unto thy will and unto  
 "thy holy fatherhood, and whatsoever thy greatness  
 "commandeth thy servants we [will do], according

<sup>1</sup> A village which lies about thirty miles to the north of Mâwsel.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, "and he visited them in his prayers from their diseases and sicknesses."

“to thy will and for the fulfilment of thy desire which “is one with that of our Lord ; and we will neither “cease nor be restrained from [the performance of] “anything which shall be for thy gratification.” Now when Rabban had hearkened unto them up to this point, he gave them grateful thanks, [Page 54] and blessed them ; and he provided them with his blessings for their journey, and gave unto them a *hēnānā*<sup>1</sup> and dismissed them, and they went to their village rejoicing, and giving thanks unto and glorifying God, Who had made their village to be in the neighbourhood of this holy man. Now Rabban Hôrmîzd was a kinsman of that stone which was laid in Jerusalem upon which whosoever fell was broken in pieces ; and like that stone did Rabban Hôrmîzd become in the mountains of Bêth ‘Edhrai. He was life, and joy, and gladness unto the people of Al-Kôsh, but a stumbling-block, and a source of grief which leaped upon the accursed Monastery of Bezkîn ; he was anguish and Fol. 43 b a terror unto the heretic village of Arsham, | and a tribulation and an affliction unto the wasted tavern<sup>2</sup> of Bezkîn of the teachers of heresy. Now at that time the village of Arsham was full of heretics,<sup>3</sup> but after a certain time the governor of the city of

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> Our author applies this insulting name to the Monastery of Bezkîn meaning to indicate that the monks there had turned their house into a public guest-house where any wayfarer could obtain meat and drink on payment, and that they were careless as to the spiritual life which monks ought to lead. The site of the Monastery of Bezkîn is unknown.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, “the village of Arsham was all heretics (*i. e.*, Jacobites).” Arsham was situated near Al-Kôsh.

Mâwsel drove out the inhabitants that were therein from the neighbourhood of the holy man, and believing Christians from the country of Hâzâr<sup>1</sup> came, and they live there at this time. And Mâr 'Abhd-Îshô', Bishop of Bêth Nûhdérân,<sup>2</sup> came unto our Monastery, and our monks went down with him to the village of Arsham, and they consecrated a church [there] with vigil, and with Psalms, and with hymns of praise, and behold, the village is a habitation of orthodox Christians unto this day. And the believers of Al-Kôsh and the people who were of the same faith were glad, and they rejoiced in the coming of the holy old man, Rabban Hôrmîzd.

Now there was in that country a certain village which was situated [at a distance of] about two or three parasangs from the Monastery, and its name was Bêth Kôpâ,<sup>3</sup> and, as soon as the people thereof heard of the coming of the holy old man Rabban Hôrmîzd to that mountain of Bêth 'Edhrâyê, they took their sick folk and went up to the blessed man | that they might see him, and might also be blessed <sup>fol. 44 a</sup> by him, and also that he might lay his hand upon them and they might be healed. And it came to pass that one of the sick folk who were with them, whilst he was yet at a distance [Page 55] of a journey of one stage from where the blessed man was, was overcome by the severity of his sickness and died on the road, and the company of the believing folk were

<sup>1</sup> A district near Mâwsel.

<sup>2</sup> A Nestorian Church province which extended from Eski-Mâwsel to Jabal al-Jûdî; see Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, 208—216.

<sup>3</sup> A village which lay between Baṭnâyê and Tell Uskûf on the road between Mâwsel and Al-Kôsh.

deeply pained on his account. Now they wished to bury him by the roadside, before they went up to the holy man, but his parents began to curse and to swear at them, saying, "They shall not bury him "until Rabban shall see him and then they may bury "him". And when they had arrived at the cave of the holy man they all went in, and were blessed by him, and, before they could tell him the cause of the death of the sick man who had died with them on the road, the blessed man himself said unto them, "Come ye in peace, O my children, for ye decided "rightly within yourselves not to bury the dead man "who died with you on the road until Rabban should "see him. And now, my brethren, that ye have seen "me, bring unto me the dead man who died with "you on the road." And as soon as they had brought the dead man and set him before him, Rabban

Fol. 44 b Hôrmîzd stood up straightway before | our Lord in prayer, and made supplication with sad and bitter tears that, peradventure, the soul of that dead man might come to life again. Now after his prayer, which [continued] for one hour, during which time he was making entreaty and supplication, God hearkened unto the petition of the holy old man forthwith, and he made the soul of the young man to go back into him speedily; and that young man who had just been raised from the dead rubbed his eyes like one who had just risen from sleep, and he asked for water to drink. Then Rabban made a washing of water [from his cross] mixed with some holy dust,<sup>1</sup> and gave it unto him to drink, saying

<sup>1</sup> See above, page 73.

unto him, "Fear thou not, O my son, for thou shalt "not die now, but thou shalt live for a season, and "then thou shalt die." Now when the company of believing men saw the wonderful thing which Rabban had wrought, they glorified God and gave thanks unto Him because, in His mercy, He had made them worthy to see Rabban and the miracles which were wrought by him, and also to be blessed by him. And those multitudes fell upon the holy [Page 56] old man and kissed his hands and his feet, and they rubbed the dust which was under his feet upon their faces, and they also carried it away as a *hēnānā*<sup>1</sup> and as a heavenly | gift. Then Rabban rebuked them Fol. 45 a [and drove them] from him, saying, "If ye shew your-selves unto me in this wise I will depart from you, "and ye shall never again see me here." Now when they had heard these [words] from him, they ceased from thrusting themselves upon him, and then he prayed over them, and gave them a *hēnānā*, and dismissed them that they might go unto their village in peace. So they departed and spread abroad the report of him in all the country round about them.

And when these people heard [thereof], every man carried his sick folk [unto him], those who were possessed of devils, and the lame, and the blind, and those who were vexed with the long-continued sickness of fever, and those who were smitten with diseases of every kind. [Then were seen<sup>2</sup>] women

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> Some words seem to have dropped out of the text here.

who had been barren suckling children, and dead men rising from the dead, and those who had been grievously vexed relieved, and the poor having the Gospel preached unto them, and devils going forth [from men and women] and proclaiming the greatness of Jesus the Nazarene, and lepers being cleansed, and prophecies receiving fulfilment by His grace. For the whole of the people of the country which was round about him poured forth like a flood, and hastened and went up to this advocate of the truth, and by means of him they received perfect healing from God. Now he merely laid his right hand upon

Fol. 45 b them, | and pronounced over them [the name] "Jesus "Christ", and his holy odour used to heal every [kind of] sickness and disease of any man whatsoever who was brought before him. He opened the spiritual storehouse of heavenly treasures which had been given unto him by his Lord, and he began to distribute the spiritual money of his Lord among his companions, and he who was in very truth a good and wise treasurer divided it equally [among all] without accepting the person of any man; [Page 57] and his Lord established him over the members of His house that he might give unto them sustenance in its proper season. Blessed indeed art thou, O old man, yea, blessed with all heavenly blessings, for thou didst break the whole loaf of the perfection of thy soul without sparing, and didst set it upon the table of the spiritual church, and those who were an hungered and were poor ate their fill therefrom.

Now when the Satanic tavern of Bezkin, that monastery of wickedness, saw this merchant of the house

of God, this rich man who enriched his poor companions, and who held the sword of the Spirit in his right hand and destroyed the ranks and legions of heresy, they were jealous and became filled with a mighty envy of the righteous man, even as Cyril<sup>1</sup> of the just man Nestorius.<sup>2</sup> In this manner <sup>Fol. 46 a</sup> their hearts became hardened in tumultuous rebellion, and they began to burrow in the ground of the hearts of kings and governors after the manner of Cyril in the matter of the righteous man Nestorius; but the vexations which our Nestorius bore were more in number than the evils which the Greek Nestorius endured at the hands of Cyril.

## CHAPTER IX.

### Of the stripes which Rabban Hôrmîzd received willingly from the heretics.

And it came to pass on a certain night that there gathered together and went forth from among the “shaved”<sup>3</sup> monks of Bezkin ten men who were mighty in body, and they came to the holy man Rabban Hôrmîzd, and they entered into his cave, where they

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria, who was enthroned A. D. 412; he died A. D. 444. His great dispute with Nestorius began in 428, and he maintained with great fervour and zeal that the Son of Mary was the Son of God, *i. e.*, the Divine Co-essential Son.

<sup>2</sup> He was Patriarch of Constantinople from A. D. 428 to A. D. 431. He proclaimed, “Let no man call Mary the Mother of God, for Mary was but a woman, and it is impossible that God should be born of a woman.” After a life of persecution and misery he died about A. D. 454.

<sup>3</sup> The Jacobite tonsure is in the form of a cross, some hair being shaved from the back, front, and each side of the head.

found the holy man occupied in prayer unto his Lord. And those workers of iniquity, who were like Satan their father, fell upon him, and they beat him unmercifully with dreadful blows of terrible cruelty until the skin of his whole body hung down from him in strips ; and the evil men left him lying [there] in torments of pain, and departed unto their monastery, thinking that he was actually dead ; but the [Page 58] Divine Grace of our Lord had protected him in a providential manner, and had not allowed them to kill the holy man outright.

[O Rabban Hôrmîzd,] through the fights with devils and the blows which they inflicted upon thee in thy early manhood, and through the tribulations and stripes which came upon thee in thine old age, thou didst crown thyself with the qualities of perfection !

Fol. 46 b And the blessed man was lying in his cave like a murdered man who remained unburied, but his holy soul was rejoicing within [him], for both in his early manhood and in his old age he had suffered death for his Lord's sake day by day, and each day alike ceaselessly. Now this evil thing which the monks of Bezkîn had done unto Rabban was not hidden from the ears of the believing villagers of Al-Kôsh. And there was in the village of Al-Kôsh a certain man [who was a friend] of Rabban, and his name was Gabriel, and he was descended from the old inhabitants<sup>1</sup> of Persia ; he was exceedingly rich, and he possessed multitudes of slaves and innumerable poss-

<sup>1</sup> I. e., his family was one which had held landed property near Al-Kôsh for a very considerable time.

sessions, and very many flocks and herds. And this believing old man Gabriel had taken upon himself to minister unto the needs of the blessed man at the whole and sole cost of himself all the days of his life which he would live upon the earth. And the Lord had blessed him greatly, and had enriched him exceedingly through the prayers of Rabban, even as He blessed Abraham, and he waxed exceedingly great. Now this man Gabriel used to ride upon his mule daily, and go up to Rabban, and minister unto all his wants, and such things as he lacked he sup- <sup>Fol. 47 a</sup> plied unto him. And when Gabriel had gone unto him according to his wont, and had enquired concerning his well-being, and had also been blessed by him, he perceived that the condition<sup>1</sup> of the holy man was different that day from what it had been the day before, and he also saw [the marks of] stripes upon the holy old man; and he had never on any day seen him as he then saw him. Then the believing Gabriel answered and said unto him, "Father, "what are these marks which I see upon thee? This "day thou art different from what I have ever [Page 59] "seen thee before." And Rabban said unto him with a smile, "O Gabriel, knowest thou not that those "who enter into a war give blows and receive them?" Now Gabriel thought that it was the devils who had been beating him, for that believing man was well aware of the strife and battle which Rabban was always waging with Satan and the evil spirits, and therefore he desisted from making any further en-

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "affairs".

quiries into those matters ; and when he had made an end of and finished his ministration unto him, he devoted himself to attending unto his worldly affairs. And as he was walking in that mountain and making Fol. 47 b enquiries concerning his flocks, and directing | the pasturing of his sheep, the shepherd saw that Gabriel, the owner of the flocks, was sad, and he said unto him, "Doth my lord permit me to speak unto him ? "What is the cause of thy sadness ? I know not, but "peradventure thieves have fallen upon thee and "plundered thy possessions, or perhaps a highway "robber hath come upon thee ; tell me [what aileth "thee]." Then the believing Gabriel answered and said unto his shepherd, "No [thieves] have plundered "my goods, and no man hath fallen upon me. There "is only one thing which giveth me pain ; I have "seen that my Rabban hath many stripes [upon him, "and that they have been inflicted] by strangers, but "I know not who hath smitten him." The shepherd answered and said unto Gabriel, "If I tell thee what "hath happened unto Rabban what wilt thou do for "me ? " And the shepherd said unto him, "Ten monks "from the monastery of Bezkiñ beat the old man "Rabban the whole night long and inflicted tortures "upon him." Now when Gabriel heard these things from his shepherd he blazed up with wrath and anger, and forthwith he mounted his mule, and in his wrath directed his way straight to Rabban that he might learn the truth from him. And as soon as he had gone into the presence of Rabban, who blessed him, before he could speak a word with Rabban, Rabban answered and said unto Gabriel, "Peace, Gabriel, |

“thou art laden with the zeal and spirit of Elijah, <sup>Fol. 48 a</sup>  
“and thou dost meditate spoiling me of my divine  
“qualities.” Then Gabriel said unto him, “I have  
“learned concerning thee from my shepherd, and from  
“him have I heard an evil matter which hath made  
“me exceedingly wroth, for he told me [Page 59] that  
“the monks of Bezkin have been evilly entreating and  
“beating thee, and on this account I am wroth. But  
“this very day I will smite the monastery with fire,  
“and I will make it a desert mound unto the dwellers  
“therein.” And the blessed man answered and said  
unto him, “O Gabriel, cease from these things, and  
“leave the avenging of me unto our Lord; for the  
“time of their destruction is nigh, and that which is  
“about to come upon them hasteneth; let it not hap-  
“pen through thy pure hands, but by the hands of  
“God, Who is my Helper, and Who knoweth my  
“paths. If thou wouldest seek to avenge me, and if  
“thou art jealous on my behalf, avenge me first of  
“all upon the company of devils, and the prince of  
“devils, and the evil spirits who have dominion over  
“the air. Now in this thing I have reason to boast,  
“that is to say, in the vexings which spring from  
“devils, and fiends, and evil spirits, for the vexings  
“caused by devils, and the patient endurance of the  
“heathen constitute the riches of holy men. And if  
“thou wouldest strip me of these things, O Gabriel, I  
“should not be able to dwell in thy neighbourhood.  
“But now, I abide patiently for a little, and thou shalt <sup>Fol. 48 b</sup>  
“see what thou wouldest desire for my sake, for the  
“Lord shall fight for you if ye will only hold your  
“peace.” And the blessed man, by means of his

gentle and gracious words, quenched the embers of the fire of the zeal of the believing man, and Gabriel returned to his village with his soul filled with tranquillity, and peace, and with love towards [his] neighbour, through the prayers of Rabban ; but he laughed over the end and the destruction of the monks of Bezkin, who ceased not from nor repented of their attack upon Rabban. But their father Satan gave them knowledge by means of the following act of cunning.

#### CHAPTER X.

##### Of the harlot of Bezkin, and of her being raised to life after death by Rabban.

There was a certain woman who was a harlot, and she belonged unto one of the sons of the polluted tavern [Page 61] of Bezkin, which hath had the name “Monastery of Bezkin” given unto it ; the monks thereof were “shorn” outwardly, but in secret they were workers of wickedness, and they wished to make our Rabban an associate with them in the business of their unclean harlotry. Now from among those “shorn”<sup>1</sup> men there were banded together unclean men who, either more or less, formed a company of about five monks who performed the works of whoredom in a shameful way and after the manner of dogs, and moreover, without modesty, and improperly, | and contrary to nature, they behaved with lasciviousness in

<sup>1</sup> The writer of this life, a Nestorian, uses this word in an opprobrious manner.

the manner of the men of Sodom like unto mad dogs, and they worked their deeds of wantonness and lust upon that woman, and upon others who were like unto her. Now therefore when the woman had tarried with them for a season, she conceived, and she gave birth unto a man child in that monastery, and those unto whom the woman belonged doubled their [evil] business in a manner which was more wicked than that which they had done at the first. For the five men, who had made the woman to conceive and had begotten the child by her, being afraid lest the governor of the country should get knowledge of them, and lest a decree of judgment which was commensurate with their crime should go forth against them, acted cunningly with the harlot, and said unto her, "Rise thou up, and we will carry thee to the village "of Arsham, for thou canst not remain here with us "in the monastery on account of the child's cries, "and if by chance the governor get knowledge con- "cerning us he will destroy both thee and us in an "exceedingly cruel manner." Now when the harlot heard these [words] from those "shorn" men, she was exceedingly afraid, and said unto them, "Whatsoever "ye wish, that do." Then the five men rose up in that night, and they took the woman and her son, and went forth together, and they arrived at the lower part<sup>1</sup> of the cave of Rabban Hôrmîzd; and they lifted up | the harlot, and dashed her mercilessly Fol. 49 b upon the ground, and they took a knife and ripped her up, and they threw her against the opening of

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, some place near the entrance to the cave.

the cave of the holy man with her son, and departed. And straightway those abominable men ran and went into the city, and informed the governor, [Page 62] saying, "Behold, a certain woman from the village of "Arsham came unto Hôrmîzd, who hath been thought "by you to be the righteous man of the Nestorians, "that that deceiver might pray for her, and because "there was no one with the woman he hath taken "her in fornication (God forbid !'), and hath ravished "her, after which he slew both herself and her little "son."

And when the governor had heard these [words], he was greatly moved, and he went forth [to the mountain], together with crowds from the city, and when the governor and the multitude which was with him drew nigh unto the opening of Rabban's cave, they saw the woman who had been murdered, and her child lying upon her alive. Now the people of the village of Al-Kôsh had also heard this rumour, and they were much distressed for Rabban's sake ; but they did not believe this report of him, for they were well acquainted with the perfection of that spiritual man. And they all armed themselves, and in a  
 Fol. 50<sup>a</sup> body they took their way | to go up unto the blessed man, and they and the soldiers of the governor arrived at the cave of the blessed man together ; and they saw the governor who had been roused against Rabban heaping blasphemies and blows upon him. Then Gabriel of Al-Kôsh, the servant of Rabban,

<sup>1</sup> An exclamation which is due, probably, to a pious scribe ; the copyist to emphasize it has written ~~aww~~ in red.

restrained the governor and said unto him, “It be-  
“fitteth not the governor to be thus hasty in such  
“difficult matters as these, for he should first of all  
“examine and enquire into both sides, and then let  
“the guilty one receive punishment; and if one be in-  
“nocent he meriteth commendation.” And the gover-  
nor said unto Gabriel, “What testimony greater than  
“that which we have before us do we need? For  
“the murdered woman lieth at the door of him that  
“slew her.” Then Gabriel said unto him, “There is  
“a testimony greater than this which we may have,  
“that is to say, the murdered woman may bear  
“testimony against him that slew her, and accuse  
“him.” And the governor said, “If what thou hast  
“said can take place, there can be no greater testi-  
“mony.” Then Gabriel, who had confidence in the  
boldness of speech which Rabban possessed with his  
Lord, turned to Rabban, and said unto him, “Rise  
“up, now, [Page 63] and make entreaty unto thy Lord  
“that thy truth may be made manifest, and that the  
“falsehood of the liars may be made evident;” and  
Rabban being full of grace and <sup>Fol. 50 b</sup> humility, prayed  
concerning this matter. And when he had ended his  
prayer, and had said “Amen”, he turned towards the  
dead body, and said unto it with his voice, “O dead  
“body, in the Name of Jesus the Nazarene, rise thou  
“up from thy murdered state, and accuse him that  
“slew thee;” and at the word which Rabban spake  
to the murdered woman the spirit entered into her  
members, and she began to speak in a miraculous  
manner. Then Rabban drew nigh unto her, and said  
unto her, “Tell me truly, who was it that committed

“sin with thee, and slew thee?” And the woman made answer unto Rabban, and said unto him in the presence of the governor and the crowd of people, that five of the monks of the Monastery of Bezkin had committed fornication with her in that monastery for a very long time, and finally, she declared for how long a period they had done so, “and then”, said she, “they brought me unto this place by night, “and slew me. And I know nothing else except that “is thou who hast called me and hast roused me up “from the abysses of Sheol.” Then she became silent, and she spake no more.

And again Rabban answered and said unto the governor, “Take this child of the murdered woman “and set him upon thy knees”; and the governor Fol. 51 a did so. Then Rabban adjured | the child, and said unto him, “Unto thee I speak, O thou child who “hast no speech, and by the command of God I tell “thee to declare in the presence of all who thy father “is, for thy mother hath not declared it.” And the Lord opened the mouth of the child, and he began to say thus:—“Of the seed of two of them have I “been fashioned in the womb of my mother”—now the child said that his mother had had five husbands in Bezkin, but that three of them were impotent, and he said that he came into the world through two of them—then the child became silent, and he spake no more. And when the crowd of people saw this wonderful thing, they all fell down before the feet of the blessed man, and they kissed them, [Page 64] saying, “Forgive us, O our father, for we have sinned, and “we have acted foolishly in condemning thee; let the

"string of thine anger return upon the bow, and let  
"it shoot the arrow through the heart of those who  
"have committed folly"; and they took away the  
dust of the cave of the blessed man as if it had  
been a heavenly gift. Then the people of Al-Kôsh  
departed to their village, and brought a bier, and  
lifted up the dead body of the woman, and they  
carried it down from the mountain of Rabban, even  
as the holy man had commanded them, and they  
buried it at the foot of the mountain. | And Gabriel, Fol. 51 b  
the true friend of Rabban, took the son of the woman,  
who was nine months old, and placed him where he  
would be suckled and reared, and when he had  
grown up, and had arrived at the age of twenty  
years, he became a monk in the monastery of Rab-  
ban; and he excelled greatly in the glorious deeds  
of asceticism, and went out of this world with merit  
unspeakable.

And the governor, and all the people who were  
with him and had seen the wonderful thing which  
Christ had wrought by the means of Rabban Hôr-  
mîzd, were filled with divine zeal, and they beat the  
"shorn" [monks of Bezkin] with hard blows, and they  
attacked the monastery and plundered everything  
which was therein. And the governor bound those  
who dwelt in the tavern of Satan tightly with bonds,  
and carried them away with him, and shut them up  
in the prison-house of the city of Bâlâdh, and he wrote  
to the great governor of Mâwsel [an account of]  
their crimes; but the great governor of Mâwsel took  
a large bribe from the heretics who were in Bâlâdh  
and in Mâwsel, and commanded them to go back to

their monastery, and to restore it to its former condition, according to their desire, without any human  
Fol. 52 *a* opposition. | Then these “shorn” men returned to their monastery with rejoicing and gladness, for they had received much money from their fellow heretics in the city of Mâwsel, and in Bâlâdh, and they began to build and to restore their wasted habitations, and they also set up pillar saints and made them to dwell therein; but behold, although the building was [re-]founded it prospered not.

[Page 65] And Rabban Hôrmîzd continued in his conversation with God, and he was always enjoying divine revelations, and he possessed no other thoughts except those of the admiration of divine things and of the gladness of the new world. On one occasion the mind of the holy old man carried him to the consideration of the heretics who were his neighbours, and of their error, when suddenly he saw standing by his side the angel of the Lord; and as soon as the angel came unto him his soul was illumined with the knowledge of the most profound and sublime things, the condition and qualities of which the human intelligence that can comprehend them with the understanding of its mind hath not been fashioned. Then that angel began to sing with the blessed man from the beginning of [the Psalms of] David even unto the end thereof, and the angel also raised the glorious canticle [which beginneth], “The living are “not able to hearken unto the words of his sweet-“ness;” now in that hour the mercy of heaven aided  
Fol. 52 *b* Rabban, | or perhaps his soul would then have departed from his body. And when the angel had

made an end of his canticle, he began to sing the following versicle :—

“The mighty King of the celestial beings  
Built for Himself a palace (*or*, fortress) in the heights  
of heaven,  
And He gave unto it the name “Jerusalem  
Of the firstborn, [whose names] are written in the  
heavens”.  
He fixed a ladder of life in His Church,  
And He drew up and made to ascend it His house-  
hold  
Unto the beautiful abode of spiritual beings,  
That they might become heirs of His kingdom.”

And when the versicle of the angel had come to an end, he smote one wing upon the other and ascended into heaven from the place where he had alighted ; and Rabban was filled with gladness, which was the similitude of the joy of the new world, through the divine operation which regardeth the happiness of the children of men.

## CHAPTER XI.

How Shâibîn, the son of 'Ukbê,<sup>1</sup> was raised from the dead.

Now Shâibîn the Arab, the son of 'Ukbê, the great governor of Mâwsel, fell sick of a disease, and his sickness waxed exceedingly sore and grievous, and although the physicians of the city laboured with him,

<sup>1</sup> He has been identified with 'Okba bin Muḥammad al Khuzâ'i, who was Wâli of Mâwsel A. D. 886, by Noeldeke ; see *Z. D. M. G.*, 1895, p. 532.

in no wise [Page 66] did they benefit him, on the con-  
Fol. 53 a trary, his sickness gained more and more hold | upon  
him. And his father was distressed greatly because  
of him, for the physicians had cut off his hope, saying,  
“Our knowledge faileth [to help us] in the sickness  
“of this young man, but we counsel thee, O our Amîr  
“‘Ukbê, to carry thy son gently in a litter and to take  
“him to the holy man Rabban Hôrmîzd, and when he  
“hath laid his right hand upon him he will be healed  
“completely of whatever sickness he hath upon him.”  
Now when the Amîr ‘Ukbê had heard these [words],  
he commanded and they made ready a chariot (*or*,  
carriage) for his son, and they placed him in it, and  
taking his soldiers with him he set out to go unto  
the holy man Rabban Hôrmîzd at Mount ‘Edhrai.  
And when he had drawn nigh unto the village of Al-  
Kôsh, according to the dispensation of Divine Pro-  
vidence, which doeth all things well for the creatures  
of His creation, the young man’s pain overpowered  
him, and he was convulsed with his sickness, and he  
died; and his father ‘Ukbê was distressed greatly be-  
cause of him, and he was uttering cries of grief, and  
because he had no other son except that young man  
he was weeping bitterly for his son’s death. Then  
Fol. 53 b the villagers of Al-Kôsh and Gabriel, | the servant of  
Rabban, gathered themselves together, and they drew  
nigh unto ‘Ukbê, and said unto him, “O our lord,  
“live for ever! Thou didst, in thy faith, come unto  
“Rabban Hôrmîzd that he might heal him (*i. e.*, ‘Ukbê’s  
“son) of his sickness, but behold, by Divine Pro-  
“vidence, death hath overtaken him here, and he hath  
“died. Now, O our good Amîr, be not cast down

“with grief, for we all counsel thee to go to Rabban, “having thy son who hath died with thee, and we “believe by the God Whom the righteous man serveth, “that he will make thy son who is dead to live [again], “even as he hath done for many who are like unto “thee now.” And inasmuch as the Amîr ‘Ukbê was a good man, and a believer also, he hearkened unto those believing men graciously, and he gave the command straightway, and they laid the dead man upon an animal, and together with ten of his companions they took him up to [Page 67] the blessed man ; and his servant Gabriel, and a crowd of the believing men of Al-Kôsh accompanied with honour the Amîr unto the place where the holy man was. And when they had come to the holy man, the governor saluted him, and sat down with him. Then the governor answered and said unto the holy man, | “My lord, I have Fol. 54 a faith in thy prayers, and because of them I came “unto thee from the city of Mâwsel in faith, with the “hope that my son would be healed ; but when I ar-“rived at the village of Al-Kôsh, according to the “will of God and that which was to take place con-“cerning him, the young man died in my hands. And “I fell into despair concerning him, and I sought to “return unto the city of Mâwsel, but the lords of the “village of Al-Kôsh counselled me not to go back “until I had come to thee ; and now receive thou me, “and visit thou me with thy prayers which are hear-“kened to before thy Lord, and send me not back “empty to the city of Mâwsel, lest the heathen and “the heretics their enemies say, ‘Êhê, Êhê, our eye “hath seen him.’” Now to these words the holy man

returned no answer whatsoever, but he fixed his gaze upon the ground and his mind upon God, and he became conscious secretly in his spirit that He was about to send the young man back to life again. And the holy man answered and commanded his servant Gabriel to bring the young man and to set him before him, and Gabriel did so. | Then Rabban Hôrmîzd turned his face to the East, and prayed before our Lord, saying, "O our Lord Jesus Christ, Thou "beloved Son, Who art from the Holy Father; Thou, "O our Lord, the Son of Mary, the Son of God, "during Thy human dispensation didst raise from the "dead three dead men. The children of Thy nation, "the Jews, crucified Thee upon the wood, and Thou "wast buried in the heart of the earth three days and "three nights, and, having risen from the grave in "the glory of Thy Father, Thou didst<sup>1</sup> take Thy seat "in the heavens at the right hand of Thy Father. "And Thou didst command us to ask of Him petitions "in the Name of Jesus [Page 68], and to live and to "believe in Him, and that every thing should be "[given] unto us. In the Name of Jesus the Nazarene, "rise up, O Shâibîn, from thy state of death." And at this word life entered into the young man, and his flesh began to quiver, and as soon as the holy old man saw that his life had entered into him he drew nigh to the body, and moved his right hand three times over him that was dead, and said, "Shâibîn,

<sup>1</sup> Here the text changes into the third person:—"And He took "His seat in the heavens at the right hand of His Father, and He com- "manded us to ask [things] of Him in prayer, in the Name of Jesus", etc.

"Shâibîn, in the Name of Jesus the Nazarene rise  
 "thou up from the dead, for by His Resurrection our  
 "Lord Jesus hath abrogated the sentence of death  
 "which was passed on thee;" and immediately he  
 opened his eyes, and they straightened him, | and he <sup>Fol. 55 a</sup> sat up. Then the holy man drew nigh unto him and gave him a washing [from his cross] to drink, and he drank, and he broke a cake of sacramental bread and gave him to eat. And when he had eaten and drunk, all those who were standing there were seized with wonderment and joy, and they cried out, saying, "In very truth the Christians stand in the truth, and "they worship their Lord Christ blamelessly, for by "the Name of Jesus the Nazarene this man hath been "raised from the dead."

Now as the Arabs and the people of Al-Kôsh were thus rejoicing, suddenly there burst upon them<sup>1</sup> the "shorn", accursed sons of Bezkin, who had come to salute the Amîr, and to condole with him on the death of his son, but behold, they saw that the son of the governor had been raised from the dead. Evil [be] upon you, O ye heretics, who put to death the God-head! Behold now, by the Name of Jesus, the Man Who was God, the dead live through the man Rabban Hôrmîzd! [And the monks of Bezkin] saluted the governor, and blessed him also, and instead of comforting and consoling him,<sup>2</sup> for which purpose they had come, they began to ascribe glory unto God, and to say, "Thanks be unto God | Who hath given joy unto <sup>Fol. 55 b</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "there burst upon them the coming of the shorn", etc.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, "to fill his heart."

"us and thee through the restoration to life of thy  
"son Shâibîn by the hands of the servant of the liv-  
"ing God, the glorious Rabban Hôrmîzd." But the  
governor answered them never a word, for he despised  
and rejected their words because [Page 69] they were  
remote from the truthfulness of Rabban Hôrmîzd, and  
he turned his face away from them, and directed the  
gaze of both his eyes and his heart towards Rabban.  
Then the governor answered and said unto Rabban,  
"Master, I know not with what similitudes I can liken  
"and compare thee this day. [Shall I say thou art]  
"like the angel of God? But why should I say [thou  
"art like] the angels? Nay, thou resemblest the Lord  
"of the angels through thy divine and triumphant  
"works. For by the Name of Jesus the Nazarene thou  
"hast made to live my son who was dead, and thou  
"hast made him to come back from the devouring  
"Sheol, and he hath [again] seen the light of life.  
"And with what can I recompense thee for the great  
"goodness which thou hast wrought for me, and for  
"my son [who was] dead whom thou didst bring back  
"to life by thy prayers? Even if I were to give thee  
"all my kingdom and my possessions, what, I say,  
"would the doing of this be for thee in return for  
"that which thou hast done for me? There is nothing

Fol. 56 a "which I can do here that will compare, | even in the  
"smallest degree, with what thou hast done for me.  
"Nevertheless let me be baptized in the Name of  
"Him in Whose Name my son was restored to life  
"from the state of death; yet am I not worthy to  
"make perfect the true faith in my soul, but only let  
"His Name be proclaimed over us, and we shall live

"thereby. Only, O my lord, give thou unto me the baptism of repentance and let us be pardoned thereby, even as John gave the baptism of repentance unto the people of the Jews."<sup>1</sup>

And the holy man said unto the governor, "Thou knowest that I have not with me here the holy vessels and the things necessary for the performance of the holy service of baptism, for I have not even a little clay vessel in which to fetch a little water to drink, how then canst thou demand at my hands the vessels which are meet for baptism?" Then did John, the "shorn", accursed, and abominable head of the Monastery of Bezkin, make answer on behalf of the Amîr, saying, "O my lord the Amîr, behold our monastery is provided with every thing which is necessary for baptism, and thou canst be baptized by us just as well as by the hands of Rabban, because baptism by him or by us is the same thing." Now when Rabban and the crowds that were gathered together there [Page 70] heard these [words] from John they marvelled exceedingly at his audacity, and Rabban answered | and said unto John the wretched one, Fol. 56 b "O sinful man, the matter is not thus, for our baptism and your baptism no more resemble each other than do God and Satan, or light and darkness, and if thou wishest it, O thou audacious one, I will make this manifest unto thee by the following act."

<sup>1</sup> This allusion to the preaching of repentance by John seems to shew that 'Ukbè was acquainted with the New Testament.

## CHAPTER XII.

Of the wonderful thing which Rabban wrought in the matter of the difference between our baptism and that of the Jacobites.

And John said unto Rabban, ‘‘If thou canst in very ‘‘deed shew us this thing according as thou hast said, ‘‘then thou wilt be a speaker of the truth and I shall ‘‘be a liar.’’ Then Rabban, having made the governor and all those who were gathered together there to be his witnesses, cried unto Gabriel his servant, and said unto him, ‘‘Bring hither unto me quickly a large brass ‘‘vessel, and two young children who have been bap- ‘‘tized, the one a son of Nestorians, and the other a ‘‘son of Jacobites;’’ and Gabriel did this in haste. And Rabban poured (literally, cast) water into the vessel,<sup>1</sup> and consecrated it in the [Name of] the Holy Spirit, and he took the son of the Nestorians, who had been baptized, and dipped him in the vessel of water, whereupon the fluid nature of the water stood up as it were in skin bottles, on the sides of the vessel, in a most wonderful and marvellous manner; and when [the people] saw [this] they glorified God. Then, whilst the water was still standing up against the sides

Fol. 57 <sup>a</sup> of the vessel, Rabban took the | son of the Jacobites, and cast him into the Jordan,<sup>2</sup> whereupon the water

<sup>1</sup>  is glossed by , the Arabic طشت, or طشت. I have heard this word applied, in Mesopotamia and the Sûdân, to the large brass, or copper, vessel, about two and a half feet in diameter, and eight inches deep, in which the dough is mixed for a large number of bread cakes, or the family clothes are washed.

<sup>2</sup> The name ‘‘Jordan’’ is often given to the baptismal tank.

immediately embraced him, and he was baptized therein. And the crowds who were there marvelled and said unto Rabban, "What is this marvellous difference "in [the behaviour] of this water which we have seen? "Explain it unto us now." Then Rabban said unto them, "The young child who went down to the water "first [Page 71] of all is the son of Nestorians, and be- "cause he had been once already baptized, when he "went down [the second time] to the water of baptism, "the holy water fled from him, even as ye have seen, "and it would not baptize him. But the second young "child who went down to baptism was the son of "Jacobites, and was in need of baptism, and when he "went down to the water of baptism it embraced him, "and he was baptized thereby; for [the Jacobites] do "not possess holy baptism, but only an inferior and "lying baptism."<sup>1</sup> Now when the crowds saw this great and glorious miracle they all glorified God, saying, "There is no true faith except that which Rabban "Hôrmîzd, the servant of the living God, preacheth." Then, first of all Shâibîn, the man who was dead and had been raised to life again, | went down to <sup>Fol. 57 b</sup> the vessel and was baptized, and after him [went] his father, 'Úkbê the Amîr, and then one by one the ten Arabs, the companions of the governor, who also had believed in Rabban. And the heretics who had come at first to offer consolation unto the governor returned in great shame unto their filthy, and accursed, and barren monastery, but the Amîr, and the people of Al-Kôsh returned unto their village in unspeakable

<sup>1</sup> A characteristic remark of the Nestorians at the present day.

joy; and there were great gladness and triumph, which can never be taken away, unto all the countries round about in the hearing of the report of the triumphs of the blessed man.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### Of the coming of the heretics to slay the blessed man, and concerning his compassion towards them.

But the sore of the wickednesses of the sons of the tavern of Bezkin was eating its way into their polluted souls, and whenever the triumphs of Rabban were noised abroad, their envy against the just man was becoming stronger day by day; and because their envy had waxed strong against him [Page 72] it conceived and gave birth to the [idea of] the murder of the righteous man in their crafty thoughts, and by day and by night they were scheming how they might kill him, saying, "Either he or we must be [master] "in this mountain." And from that time forward anxiety for the murder of the righteous man became Fol. 58 a clear in their thoughts absolutely, | and the wicked men were meditating in their minds by what means they might remove his life out of the world. Then at length they would go round about the neighbourhood of his cave night after night that, peradventure, they might find him by permission from above, when it would be easy for them to destroy him. And one night ten of them came to his cave in this wise, and when they had drawn nigh unto the entrance thereof that they might go into it, Divine Grace watchfully

held them fast at the door of his cave ; and because the mind of Rabban was at that time occupied with God, he did not know at what season [those] wicked men made their attack upon him. And when the day had dawned and the morning was come, and the mind and understanding of Rabban had returned unto him from the region of spiritual beings, he went forth in the morning from his cave to walk about, and he found those murderers lying down there ready to slay him, and they were remaining [there] without any feeling whatsoever. Then Rabban understood that they were lying in ambush, and that they had come to slay him, and he had great compassion upon them, | and he wept because they had given themselves up Fol. 58 b to such a murderous thought and intent, and because they had of their own free will devoted themselves to agreement with the Slayer of mankind, their father and teacher. Now therefore what [shall we say] of the Christlike old man? In this matter he made himself like unto his Lord Who prayed unto His Father for those who crucified Him, saying, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;” but they (*i. e.*, the monks of Bezkin) did know what they were doing, although they were not crucifying the Lord of glory. Nevertheless, like his Master, Rabban prayed for those uncircumcised ones, those [Page 73] “shorn” ones who were blind of heart, unto that Lord Who granteth the petitions of those who love Him. And his Lord hearkened unto him, and granted unto him the release of the murderers, and as soon as they had been set free from the bonds wherewith Divine Grace had bound them in its fetters, he brought them

into his cell in a compassionate manner and, with a smile on his face, he answered and said unto those cruel men, "Like murderers and robbers ye have gone forth from the shrines<sup>1</sup> of Bezkin and come against me; but put down your staves and knives from your hands, and take a little water and wash

Fol. 59 a "your hands and your feet that, peradventure, | ye "may be pardoned." Then the holy old man in his humility washed their feet with his own hands, even as our Lord [washed the feet] of Judas, the betrayer. And Rabban also brought unto them bread, and whatsoever was found with him, and in his gracious kindness, and in the humility which filled his holy soul he gave them rest; and when they had eaten, and were filled, Rabban blessed them, and dismissed them that they might depart by the way by which they had come. But those man were not diverted from their murderous intent, for whosoever Rabban was doing for them acts of kindness like unto these, or whosoever he was praying for them that they might be turned unto the knowledge of the truth, they the more whetted their swords for slaughter and their teeth for the crushing [of bones], even though they saw that they were not benefited by such things, and that they were gaining an advantage over the holy man in no way whatsoever, and that they were only adding the more unto their own wickedness. Thereupon they took the path of their father Cyril, and those wicked men

<sup>1</sup> By the use of the word *paraku* the writer indicates that the shrines of Bezkin are the abodes of mere idols; the word itself is derived from the old Babylonian word *parakku*.

ran to the polluted shrine of Mattai,<sup>1</sup> where they were offering up sacrifices unto their unclean devils.

[Page 74]

## CHAPTER XIV.

## Of their departure to Mâwṣel by sorcery, and of the blows which they received from Rabban.

And the miserable "little" brethren<sup>2</sup> received some advantage in this matter, for they [said they] were "virgins and pure", and their prayers were speedily accepted before Mattai, the chief of their shrine, when the "shorn" monks of Bezkin were stripped and naked before Mattai; now the miserable "little" brethren of Mattai were old men of shame, and "little" brethren who were of bold and impudent faces, and of corrupt desire, and they loved these devilish prayers and prostrations. And Mattai made answer unto them, saying, "Depart ye, and bring ye unto me at this "present a cake of bread, and make ye a hole in it, "and place it on the neck<sup>3</sup> of the head of the Mon-  
"astery of Bezkin"; and the children of their father did thus, even according to the answer which the

<sup>1</sup> Presumably the famous Monastery of Mâr Mattai, which was founded by Matthew, a disciple of Mâr Awgîn, early in the IVth century; it stands in the Jabal Maklûb and is about four hours' ride from Mâwsel. The Monastery is described by Badger (*Nestorians*, I. p. 97) and by Rich (*Residence*, II. p. 98).

<sup>2</sup> The diminutive form **କୋଇଁ** is, of course, here used contemptuously.

<sup>3</sup> By means of this cake some of the power of the "idol" of the Jacobites was transferred to the Archimandrite of Bezkin, who was a Jacobite; the cake was probably sacramental.

devil who was in the idol of Mattai had made unto them. Then they returned and besought him a second time that their petitions might be made mighty with men who were not of their faith<sup>1</sup> [and were in places of] honour, so that they might bring about the disgrace and the despising of Rabban Hôrmîzd the Nestorian. And the devil of Mattai made answer and said unto them, “Let the cake of bread be taken from the “head of the company of the old men of shame, and “let it be placed with reverence on the neck of them “all, one after the other, that they all may be made “perfect by the laying on (*i. e.*, the imposition) of “hands of this iniquity.”<sup>2</sup>

Fol. 60 a Now when the time for the customary festival | began to come round they took these old men, together with their head, from the “shrine” of Mattai to the tavern of Bezkin, and without delay in the morning they took in their hands no small [amount] of money, together with offerings and gifts of great value, to 'Ukbê the Amîr and Shâibîn his son. Now therefore when [Page 75] the old men, together with their head, drew nigh unto the gate of the city of Mâwsel, they took the bread cake of their devil, and having broken off a few fragments from it they dipped them in the wine which they had brought with them to offer as a precious gift unto the great governor, that thereupon the devils might fly into the mind of the governor. Then, before they had arrived at the gate of

<sup>1</sup> Literally, “those who were outside”.

<sup>2</sup> By this act the magical influence of the cake was to be transferred to each of the monks.

the governor, the governor sent forth his ambassadors to meet them that they might receive them into his house with the joy and rejoicings of devils; and as soon as the governor had met them he made them to sit down with honour upon his own throne. Now the unclean cake of bread of their sorcery was hanging at the neck of their master, and the sorcerers acted cunningly and made the governor taste | some <sup>Fol. 60 b</sup> of that wine in which the fragments of the cake of bread of Mattai had been crumbled, and as soon as he [and his son] had tasted it the operative power of the devils flew into the motions of the souls of the simple ones, and the governor 'Ukbê and his son Shâibîn were consumed with the love of them, and they were inflamed with the fire of their devils. And the [monks of Mattai] began to ask [them] to go up with them to their monastery, so that the fetters by which they were bound might be strengthened by their devils. Thus the governor took upon himself the load of his sins, and he went up to the shrine of idolatry with them, and he forgot the deed of grace which Rabban had wrought for him in the matter of raising his son Shâibîn from the dead, and the divine miracles which God had wrought towards him by means of Rabban, and he went with his enemies like an ox to his slaughter. And he perceived (*or, understood*) not the good deeds of Rabban, but cast them behind his back,<sup>1</sup> and the venomous serpents began to burrow in the heart of the captive, and to counsel him with evil counsels concerning Rabban, and they

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "his body."

said, "He is a sorcerer and a deceiver;" and the wretched governor believed firmly all these things which were said by them, because his mind had been led captive by the idol of Mattai |.

Fol. 61 a [Page 76] Now Rabban had knowledge concerning the destruction of the Monastery of Bezkin—for its overthrow had drawn nigh—by means of the gift of knowing what was going to happen beforehand which had been given unto him by the Holy Spirit. And when Gabriel of Al-Kôsh and his companions learned that the Amir 'Ukbé had gone up with joy to the Monastery of Bezkin, they went up to Rabban, and they were mourning because of what had taken place. But before they could arrive at the cave of the holy man, he went forth from the cave and met them with rejoicing, and said, "Fear ye not, O my children, because the laying "waste of the crucifying congregation<sup>1</sup> hath drawn "nigh;" now they wondered at Rabban doing thus, for it was not customary with him. And when they had been blessed by him and had sat down, before they could say anything whatsoever before him—now he already knew of their sorrow—he said unto them, "Wherefore are ye sad and in tribulation be-cause the heretics have uttered blasphemous words, "and said, 'Either he or we must be [master] in this "mountain?" This very night have they offered on my

<sup>1</sup> *אַדְלָג*, which must = *אַדְלָג אַדְלָא*, "the crucify-ing congregation". *אַדְלָג* means "crucifier", and as Payne Smith shews (col. 3404) the city of Jerusalem was called the "city of the crucifiers". As the monks of Bezkin were not Jews we can only regard the words used by Rabban as mere abuse.

“account a bribe of two talents of silver to the gov-  
“ernor of the country that he may blot me out of  
“this place, and on their behalf I have prayed unto  
“Christ | that they may be pardoned, but our Lord <sup>Fol. 61 b</sup>  
“would not [hearken], and He would not be persuaded  
“[to accept] my prayer on their behalf, and He hath  
“sent forth the decree of terrible doom and hath  
“passed the sentence of their rooting up from this  
“country on our border. As Christ liveth, and as the  
“Holy Ghost liveth, Who hath taught me to declare  
“the truth unto you, by the time that to-morrow morn-  
“ing dawneth there shall not remain of that shrine of  
“devils one stone upon another which shall not be over-  
“turned.” And that blessed company of people an-  
swered and said, “Amen”; and when they had been  
blessed by Rabban they went down from him, and  
the holy man remained in his place performing his  
divine service. Now when the evening had come he  
set<sup>1</sup> his feet in prayer before his Lord, and he prayed  
for that which would benefit the Monastery of Bezkin,  
and the inhabitants thereof, and of and by himself  
he prayed for the peace and for the stablishing of  
the [Page 77] Catholic Church, and for the pastors  
thereof, that they might be ambassadors of rest and  
peace for the children thereof; and he prayed, with  
his holy tears on behalf of young folk, that they might  
be pardoned their transgressions, and that they might  
enjoy the good things of heaven by the grace of  
Christ | and by His mercies for ever.

<sup>Fol. 62 a</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Literally, “planted.”

## CHAPTER XV.

## Of the uprooting of the polluted Monastery of Bezkin.

And when Rabban had made an end of his prayer, and had said, “Amen”, behold, the angel of the Lord stood by his side, and there appeared in his right hand a crowbar<sup>1</sup> which was [made] wholly of iron. And he answered and said unto the holy man, “Why “art thou praying, O good and faithful servant? Take “this crowbar in thy right hand.” And when the holy man had laid hold upon the crowbar the angel said unto him, “With this crowbar I am commanded to “uproot the idolatrous shrine of the Monastery of Bez-“kîn, and to lay it waste, and to scatter abroad the “inhabitants thereof, and to make it a desert heap “for ever; and moreover, no inhabitant shall either “dwell or be therein again.” Then the spiritual being rose up and went out, having in his hand the crowbar [which he had taken] from the holy man, and he directed his course towards that monastery; and he smote it with his mighty voice, and scattered the inhabitants thereof from it. And again he smote it and made its foundations to quake, and he threw down [the building thereof] from [upon] its foundations; those who fled and went forth therefrom at the first quaking escaped, but those who were so bold as not to flee,

<sup>1</sup> Syr. **كُرْبَر**, Arab **كُرْبَر**, a chisel, chopper, hatchet, stone drill, mattock, a name given to any kind of tool used by a stone mason. Manna's *Vocabulaire*, Mossoul, 1900, p. 226. **كُرْبَر** explains the word by **أَلْهَةُ لَفْر**, but the meaning “crowbar” suits the text best.

but dared to resist the word of the voice of the spiritual being, died a terrible, cruel, horrible, and awful death beneath the stones. And the spiritual being <sup>Fol. 62 b</sup> made his voice to be heard in the ears<sup>1</sup> of all flesh that was therein; and the first who heard it was the Amîr 'Ukbê, who had taken up his abode that night in the monastery, and he was the first to make his escape and to go forth from the terror and horror which had fallen upon him there. [Page 78] Now the first to hear of the punishment which had befallen that monastery were the brethren [and] disciples who dwelt in the school of Mâr Íth-Allâhâ,<sup>2</sup> and they armed themselves, and came, and began to plunder it, and they loaded themselves heavily with the abundant possessions which they took therefrom. And the next to hear thereof were the villagers of Arsham, and Harébhâ, and Kezyôn,<sup>3</sup> and they also armed themselves, and climbed over<sup>4</sup> the mountains and entered therein, and took away everything which they found. Now when 'Ukbê the governor had fled from there he was greatly ashamed to come and see Rabban, because that monastery had received the doom which had been decreed by God, and it had been laid waste, and the inhabitants thereof had been scattered, and also because the war of the devils which had inflamed him had risen up against him. Then were the eyes of his heart opened, and he knew that he had sinned greatly, and that he had not rewarded with

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "in the sight of all the flesh."

<sup>2</sup> More correctly Ait-Allâhâ.

<sup>3</sup> The exact site of this village is unknown.

<sup>4</sup> Literally, "they rode."

good those who had dealt graciously with him ; so he  
 Fol. 63 a turned away and departed to | the village of Al-Kôsh,  
 and he took up his abode in the house of Gabriel,  
 the servant of Rabban, and confessed his sin before  
 him, saying, "I have been ungrateful to the good-  
 "ness of Rabban, for instead of rewarding him with  
 "good I have, in my boastfulness, lifted up the heel  
 "against him. Let not his Master requite me for that  
 "which I have done unto him, but, according to the  
 "overflowing abundance of the goodness of his Master  
 "in the matter of the raising up of my son from the  
 "dead [which took place] through him, let Him for-  
 "give me the sin which I have sinned against Rabban."

Now inasmuch as the disciples of Mâr Îth-Allâhâ<sup>1</sup> were jealous for righteousness, when they saw what the Lord had done in the matter of the Monastery of Bezkîn which had been overthrown, fifty men of their number put on zeal for the house of God in such wise that they went and joined themselves unto Rabban ; and in the place which had been planted by the Lord, and which He had chosen for a dwelling-place for Himself, those men, who were wise in spiritual things, first of all began to build a church. Now when the believing men of the country heard thereof, they rejoiced with an exceedingly great joy, [Page 79] and each one of them | brought out what  
 Fol. 63 b soever goods he had in his possession, and gave them unto Rabban as things appertaining unto blessing for the building of that holy monastery, with a joyful heart and faithful intent for Christ's sake.

<sup>1</sup> More correctly Ait-Allâhâ.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Of the beginning of the building of the monastery, and of the gift of Khôdâhwî<sup>1</sup> of Bêth Kôpâ.

And Khôdâhwî, the son of Shûbhî, who was a believing man, and one who feared God exceedingly, [who came] from the village of Bêth Kôpâ<sup>2</sup> in the country of Nineveh, and was a lover of the worship of God, took from his riches seven talents of silver, and went up to Rabban and offered them unto him, saying, “Take these, master, from the hands of thy “servant, and let them be expended in the building “of the monastery, and pray for me, O Rabban ; and “when these have been expended on this monastery, “I will give unto thee others, O master.” Then Rabban called unto George [his] disciple, the archdeacon whom he had appointed steward of the moneys which were to be expended, and he delivered the seven talents into his hands, and said, “Take these, O my “beloved, from the hands of Khôdâhwî, the son of “Shûbhî, of Kôpâ, and let them help towards the ex-“penses ;” and George the archdeacon took them, and he began to build anew and to stablish the building of the temple and the house for the community,<sup>3</sup> and the cells for the habitation of the brethren and for

<sup>1</sup> A name of Persian origin.

<sup>2</sup> A village on the road between Mâwsel and Al-Kôsh ; see above, p. 81.

<sup>3</sup> *I. e.*, the buildings for the use of the coenobites. The use of the word ~~كِلْمَة~~ seems to indicate that a church or building of some kind was already in existence.

Fol. 64 *a* the service | of God. Then the people of the country who possessed goods of various kinds [suitable] for offerings and oblations began to bring them up to that holy monastery and to give them as gifts towards the expenses, and those who possessed neither [Page 80] gold, nor silver, nor furniture, nor brass, would work like workmen with the members of their body. And the Lord accepteth the good will which is devoted to the service of righteousness more readily than gold and silver. Now therefore 'Ukbê, the governor of the country, being desirous of making himself pleasing unto Rabban because of the act of folly which had been committed by him in going unto the "shorn" monks of the Monastery of Bezkin, also came forward, and took three talents of silver, and sent them unto Rabban by the hands of Shâibin his son; and Rabban received them from his hands, and he called George the archdeacon and Gabriel of Al-Kôsh his servant, and delivered the money into their hands that it might be [employed] in the completion of the building of the monastery.

And it came to pass in those days that it was revealed unto Rabban by the Holy Spirit that he Fol. 64 *b* should go unto the Monastery of Mattai, | and should uproot therefrom the miserable little idol<sup>1</sup> of the devil which led [men] into error; and he went forth on the morning of the following day without any of the sons of his monastery knowing whither he was going. And when he had arrived at the tavern of Mattai—now

<sup>1</sup> *κατίσθια*. The diminutive is again used here as a mark of contempt.

it was the time of sunset<sup>1</sup>—before he went into that monastery, he prayed to our Lord to hide him from the eyes of those heretics, so that they might not have knowledge of his coming thither whereby he might be cut off from [the performance of] the matter on account of which, by the Divine beck, he had been sent thither. Then when the blessed man had finished his prayer, he rose up and went into the monastery whilst it was not yet dark, and our Lord gave him mercy in the eyes of the doorkeeper of the Monastery of Mattai, and he received him; and he wished to refresh him with meat and drink, but Rabban refused it, saying unto the doorkeeper, “My lord, “I am a stranger and I am a slave of a Persian who “is of a cruel disposition; and because I have no “strength in me to work for him and to minister unto “him, for I am a [Page 81] feeble old man, even as “thou seest, I have fled from him whither I could. “And now, my lord, I beseech thee to permit me to “hide myself with thee this night, and in the morn-“ing | before daybreak, I will take my flight from be- Fol. 65 a “fore my lord’s eyes; and the Lord shall reward thee “for this good deed, and for the act of grace which “thou hast shewn unto me.” Now when the door-keeper saw his humility and his wretched condition,<sup>2</sup> Rabban was regarded with mercy by him, and he took him and carried him to the place of the shrine

<sup>1</sup> The distance from the Monastery of Rabban Hòrmizd to the Monastery of Mattai is about twenty-five miles, and the climb from the plain up the rugged road to the building occupies about three or four hours.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, his want of clothes.

of the holy man Mâr Mattai, and he left him and departed. Then Rabban stood up, and performed his service of prayer before God in a holy manner,<sup>1</sup> and the Lord received the prayer of His servant, and suddenly the angel of the Lord came down to his assistance, and he opened the shrine of the holy man Mâr Mattai, and stretching out his hand into the lowermost parts of it he brought out therefrom a miserable, little idol of brass, the eyes of which were of gems made of striped beryls. And he gave the idol unto the holy man, and said unto him, "Seest thou this "miserable, and contemptible, and despicable, little "idol? In this thing dwelleth the error of the sons of "this monastery. When the holy man Mâr Mattai, the "disciple of the holy man Mâr Awgîn,<sup>2</sup> came by the "dispensation of Divine Providence unto this place,  
 Fol. 65 b "by the anxious care for him, as well as for | the "disciples his companions, which [was manifested] by "the Holy Spirit, and through Mattai, the inhabitants "of this country were turned unto the true faith in "the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, a "Divine Nature, Which never died and never shall "die, and in the Man, Who was of our [race], Jesus "Christ, Who was, by Divine Grace, God; but when "their belief had been corrupted by the impurity of "Cyril<sup>3</sup> the Egyptian, all their multitudes were forsaken

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "purely."

<sup>2</sup> He died, being a very old man, A. D. 362, and it is certain that he preached Christianity in Mesopotamia early in the IVth century. The Syriac text of his life and acts is given in *Acta Martyrum*, ed. Bedjan, Paris, 1892, pp. 376—480, and a summary of it will be found in my *Book of Governors*, vol. 1, p. CXXV ff.

<sup>3</sup> I. e., Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria; see above, p. 85.

“by the Divine Care, from one end of heaven even  
“unto the other. Then, moreover, Marcion<sup>1</sup> the sor-  
“cerer corrupted their minds and polluted their temples  
“in every place and city wherein his doctrine was ac-  
“cepted, and he taught them to place in the altars  
“[Page 82] of their iniquitous sacrifices, and in their  
“houses of assembly for worship, miserable little idols  
“like this one, that, forsooth, they might be [their]  
“saviours and deliverers from those who are worked  
“upon by devils,<sup>2</sup> and also from those devils of the  
“night<sup>3</sup> who are in the forms of dogs, so that they  
“might not have dominion over them in the month  
“of Shebât;<sup>4</sup> and would ward off from their riches

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, Marcion, the famous heretic who flourished in the second century of our era; his views are summarized from a Jacobite point of view by Bar Hebraeus, *Chron. Eccles.*, ed. Abbeloos and Lamy, I. col. 43.

<sup>2</sup> **καντρόπης**. Native authorities are not agreed as to the exact shape and form of the *kantropos*, though most of them admit that the creature, which appears to have taken the form of an animal, went about by night. The lexicons describe it as a "night devil" (Payne Smith, col. 3665), or a "night Satan", and identify it with the *Kutrub* and the 'Ul, whose attributes are well known from Arabic writers. One native authority quoted by Payne Smith says that the *kantrōpē* go forth by night and that they take the form of dogs until the day cometh. The word **καντρόπης** = *κυνάγοντωπος* or *λυκάγοντωπος*, and must be the name of a devil who goes about by night in the form of a wolf or dog, though Brun explains it by "laborans cynanthropia vel lycanthropia, morbo scil. quo putat aeger se mutatum in canem vel lupum" (*Dictionarium Syr. Lat.*, p. 602).

<sup>3</sup> I believe the text to be corrupt here and that we should read **मनुष्योः** i. e., "men possessed of devils".

<sup>4</sup> The Syrian month which corresponds roughly with our February. I cannot explain why Shebât should be a particularly dangerous month.

"the vexatious and erring wandering of rebellious  
"devils."<sup>1</sup>

### CHAPTER XVII.

Of the bringing out of the miserable little idol which the  
accursed ones had placed in the shrine of the holy man  
Mâr Mattai.

"Now therefore these people possess no altar what-  
"soever, and no place which hath been set apart by  
"them [for worship] in the churches, and monasteries,  
"and [other] habitations of monks, in which a wretched  
Fol. 66 a "little idol, similar to that which thou now | seest, hath  
"not been placed and hidden; and this they worship,  
"and unto it are performed their hateful, filthy, and  
"polluted works, and the grace of thy Lord hath  
"removed itself far away from them. Now it was Cyril,  
"the priest of devils and the minister of fiends, who  
"brought in [this] injurious thing upon them, and it  
"was he who first of all adopted this sacrifice of rebel-  
"lious devils, through a certain woman who was a  
"sorceress, and who lived in Egypt and was called  
"‘Kâki’,<sup>2</sup> [which is interpreted] ‘Evil sorceress’. And  
"he delivered this pagan religion unto his sons, and  
"unto the sons of the sons of his accursed and ab-  
"ominable dogma and teaching, and behold, it took  
"root and flourished in every country and province  
"by means of these wretched little idols in which  
"destructive, and accursed, and senseless, and vile  
"devils dwell. But take this idol and get thee unto

<sup>1</sup> This seems to be the meaning of this involved passage.

<sup>2</sup> Clearly the Greek word *κάκη*.

“thy monastery in peace, and now I and thou will “pray here that there may be no rest unto the sons “of its habitation from this time forward,<sup>1</sup> for there “hath been taken away from here the wretched little “idol [Page 83] which is to them in the place of God, “the Governor of the universe.”

And it came to pass that when they had prayed concerning | this matter and they had been accepted, Fol. 66 b the angel took Rabban in the strength of the Holy Spirit, and set him in his cave without toil [on his part]. And when the day had come his servant Gabriel came and was blessed by him, and he answered and said unto Rabban, “Where wast thou the whole day “yesterday? For I sought much after thee, and I “found thee not.” Then the holy man related unto him the history of the whole matter, even as it had happened, and he brought out also the wretched little idol which the angel had given unto him there; and he and all the brethren who were disciples and who had received from him his ascetic garb, and had also been numbered among the number of the brethren—now they were in number one hundred and eleven, and they were of one spirit and of one soul—rejoiced and marvelled. And Rabban told before them how the angel had helped him, and how he had given unto him this wretched little idol, to which the devil who leadeth into error had given a name, and which was the [object of] error of the sons of that region of the East. Now the devil which dwelt in that wretched little idol was unable to bear with Rabban

<sup>1</sup> Literally, “from this place.”

any longer, for he was constrained by the might of  
 Fol. 67 *a* the prayer of Rabban, | and he began to utter com-  
 plaints, saying, "Woe [is me] through thee, O son  
 "of Nazarenes ! Woe [is me] through Thee, O Jesus,  
 "the Son of Mary ! Woe [is me] through thee, O Hôr-  
 "mîzd, the son of Persians ! For thou hast driven me  
 "out of all the earth. I fled unto the abysses of Sheol  
 "from thee, and thou hast brought me up from thence  
 "in shame even this day, and even this hath not  
 "been sufficient for thee in the matter of me, for thou  
 "now wishest to make me a spectacle and a laughing-  
 "stock unto my lovers and friends in the villages  
 "wherein they hold me in honour, and in the cities  
 "wherein I was once held in esteem; and behold,  
 "this day instead of honour I have disgrace, and in-  
 "stead of glory contempt."

Now the crowds of Rabban's disciples were stand-  
 ing [there] in wonder and were listening to the devil  
 which was talking [Page 84] in this wise from inside  
 the wretched little idol. And George, the priest of  
 that monastery, took the wretched little idol from be-  
 fore Rabban, saying, "This day, O father, I will go  
 "down into the villages and cities which are round  
 "about us, and I will shew unto our people the god  
 "of the heretics, who are the children of the religion  
 "of Cyril, and of this deceiver of Mattai, and also  
 Fol. 67 *b* "of the night devils<sup>1</sup> | of Egypt;" and the counsel of  
 George his steward was good in the sight of Rabban,  
 and he permitted him to do thus. Now Gabriel of  
 Al-Kôsh was occupied with the service of the work-

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 121.

men and labourers, who were building those parts of the monastery which were to be used by those who dwelt together, and the cells. And after a period of ten months the monastery was built, and it was furnished with all the appurtenances which were befitting the service of the ascetic life, and the habitation of monks.

### CHAPTER XVIII.

#### Of the coming of the Catholicus to the consecration of the Monastery.

And Mâr Catholicus, the Patriarch of the East, Tûmârsâ<sup>1</sup> the Second, heard that the Monastery of Rabban Hôrmizd in the mountain of 'Edhrai was completed, and he rejoiced with an exceedingly great joy in Rabban, for he had been a fellow monk<sup>2</sup> of Rabban's, and a most familiar friend, and he had been in the same monastery with him, and moreover, he had been thoroughly well acquainted with his divine life and deeds from the time when they lived in close intercourse together in the holy Monastery of Rabban Bar 'Idtâ.<sup>3</sup> And by reason of the divine love which [existed] between each of them Tûmârsâ was constrained by divine love, and also because the matter necessarily called to him to come to Rabban, the

<sup>1</sup> Tûmârsâ I flourished in the latter half of the IVth century ; of Tûmârsâ II, if such a Patriarch ever existed, nothing is known. There seems to be no room for him in the List of Patriarchs ; see Assemâni, *B. O.*, III. 1. p. 611.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, "a son of the wallet."

<sup>3</sup> For his history see the translation given below.

great glory of his bishops went up from his throne,  
Fol. 68 a and came to Rabban in that mountain | of Bêth 'Edhrai.

And it came to pass that when Rabban heard and he had learned by the spirit of divine revelation that the coming of Mâr Catholicus unto him had drawn nigh, he called unto his servant Gabriel, and unto George [Page 85] his steward, and said unto them, "O my brethren and children, inasmuch as the grace "of Christ hath invited our Father, the pious Mâr Tû- "mârsâ the Second, the Patriarch of the East, and "hath, moreover, made straight his journey unto us "for sundry and divers causes which [lie] between "him and me, it is seemly for us to go down to meet "our Father, and for us to receive him with that "honour which beffitteth his greatness. Now let the "brethren go down, one hundred in number, together "with the Book of the Gospels, and with censers, and "with lights, and with branches of trees<sup>1</sup> which will "give shade; and behold, my beloved, ye must re- "ceive the pious person of our Father in Bêth Kôpâ, "a village of believing men." Then without any hesitation (*or*, delay) whatsoever, Gabriel and George did what Rabban had commanded them, and, according to what he had said unto them, that they should meet him in Bêth Kôpâ, a village of believing men, they went forth to meet him and they overtook him [there] as they were chanting holy Psalms. But inasmuch as Mâr Tûmârsâ was a man who was full of  
Fol. 68 b grace, and a fearer of God, it seemed not | good in his sight to make known concerning himself in the

<sup>1</sup> We should probably read *كُوئِنَّ*.

village of Bêth Kôpâ that he was Mâr Catholicus, and it was only after the brethren, the children of Rabban Hôrmîzd, had come to meet him with such pomp and ceremony, that the believing men of the village learned from the brethren that he was Mâr Catholicus [for they said], "Rabban hath commanded "us to go down to meet him." Then did the minds of the believing men of the village of Bêth Kôpâ fall between the mountains of doubt, for on the one hand Mâr Tûmârsâ was the Catholicus, and yet he had not revealed concerning himself that he was the Catholicus, and on the other he had proclaimed that he himself was the Patriarch; as the former he was a son of praise,<sup>1</sup> and as the latter a son of the kingdom. Then they went together to Rabban, and both companies<sup>2</sup> of men were singing [as they went] before the pious Patriarch, and chanting holy hymns and canticles.

And Rabban met Mâr Catholicus before the temple, for he was not able to walk any further by reason of his old age, and the frailty of his body which had become old and greatly wasted through the labours [Page 86] and exceedingly great toil of the ascetic life [which he had led]. Now when the two personages had received each other no tongue of flesh can describe how great was the divine joy which took up its abode in the holy soul of Mâr Tûmârsâ the Second

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, as Catholicus Tûmârsâ was a high ecclesiastical dignitary of whom they approved, both from a personal and a religious point of view; as Patriarch, however, it might be necessary to regard him as a mere high Government official.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, the one hundred monks, and the men of Bêth Kôpâ.

Fol. 69 *a* by reason of his meeting | with Rabban, and having met Rabban, the soul of Mâr Catholicus rejoiced by reason of the Divine grace wherewith he was clothed. And when they had held divine converse with each other for a brief space the holy man Rabban Hôrmîzd said unto him, "If our Father wish [it] let him "command his servants, and they shall make ready "for us a place of habitation so that thou mayest "enjoy rest, my lord, before thou shalt consecrate "this temple which hath been dedicated to the honour "of thy Lord." Then the Patriarch answered and said unto Rabban, "Yea or nay. I say unto thee that I "will not drink water this day until I have consecrat- "ed thine altar, my lord, this day." And straightway he commanded, and the beater smote the board<sup>1</sup> which called the monks together, and as soon as the whole company of the brethren was assembled in the temple Tûmârsâ the Patriarch began the service of consecration, and he was administering the Holy Mysteries to everyone from noon of the day on which he had entered into the monastery until far into the night.<sup>2</sup> And at the completion of the consecration of that holy altar the souls of Rabban and of his spiritual sons were gratified, and henceforward the whole of that country was girt about with great gladness because our Lord had held that country and the inhabitants thereof to be worthy | to see therein the Monastery of Rabban Hôrmîzd, the glorious man.

<sup>1</sup> A picture of the board which is beaten to call the monks together in Greek monasteries is given in the frontispiece to Curzon's *Visits to Monasteries in the Levant*.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, "deep evening."

But we must not dismiss into oblivion the excellence and goodness of the upright and believing man Khôdâhwî, the son of Shûbhî, and his anxious care and love for Rabban and his sons, for he desired to help with all his heart, and he exerted himself strenuously that the furniture<sup>1</sup> of that holy and godly house should be provided<sup>2</sup> from his own possessions and from the abundant riches of his fathers. And he added greatly to the large amount of money which he had already given unto Rabban, and when this [Page 87] righteous man saw Mâr Tûmârşâ, the Patriarch, passing through the village of Bêth Kôpâ to go to Rabban to consecrate that holy temple which he had founded to the glory of Christ with his name, straightway and quickly he sent his servants, together with goods and much money, to the city of Mâwsel, [saying, "See "that] there is there this day everything which is "necessary for the well-being of the Patriarch and "of the brethren." And he himself took seven mules, and loaded them with corn, and with wine, and with good things of every kind for the consecration of that holy temple, and he also took in his hand a talent of silver. And when the Patriarch had finished [administering] the Holy Mysteries, even as | I have <sup>Fol. 70 a</sup> said above, Khôdâhwî, and Gabriel, and George gathered together all the priests, and deacons, and believing men who were gathered together there to celebrate the holy festival, and he made the community of the brethren to be gratified with bread, and wine, and oil; and whatsoever remained [from

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "things."

<sup>2</sup> Literally, "filled."

the meal] of the company of believing men and priests the brethren divided among themselves. In this way did that multitude (*or*, assembly) of believers rejoice in the confession of the faith in God, and they were all bound together in one true bond of the Holy Spirit ; and each of them was talking of the confession of faith and thanks which they were offering unto God in the Holy Spirit through the supplication and prayer which the holy man Rabban [was making] on their behalf.

And our Father, the pious Mâr Tûmârsâ the Patriarch, was occupied with Rabban in the secret matters on account of which he had come unto him, and by Rabban's prayers he obtained a complete and satisfactory issue<sup>1</sup> out of them all, and he had rest from strifes by the prayers of Rabban, and by Divine Grace he obtained freedom therefrom. Then the Patriarch gave the command and wrote a decree with his own hand, in which [it] was set forth thus :— “I “Tûmârsâ the Catholicus, a stranger,<sup>2</sup> who by the “grace of God hold [the office] of Patriarch of the Fol. 70 b “Eastern Country, | whom the mercy [Page 88] of heaven “hath invited to the opening of this holy church, which “is a type and image<sup>3</sup> of the heavenly Jerusalem, I “hereby command by the heavenly nod, and I curse “by the speech of angels, and I deny by the divine “command that any Bishop or Metropolitan<sup>4</sup> in all

<sup>1</sup> Literally, “solution.”

<sup>2</sup> *καίρος*.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, “shadow.”

<sup>4</sup> On the exemption of the monastery from the jurisdiction of the bishop see Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, p. 179.

“the country hath any power to take in his hand the  
 “priestly staff, or to put on the apostolic apparel in  
 “this holy monastery which Rabban Hôrmîzd hath  
 “founded; and no one shall bind in or loose from the  
 “headship of the brethren who are in this monastery  
 “except only the Patriarch of the East, whosoever he  
 “may be, and it is only just and seemly thus to pro-  
 “claim (for this altar hath been consecrated by my  
 “hands) through the blessed and pious brethren; and  
 “the Bishops and Metropolitans who are with me to  
 “this have set [their hands].” Thus did they decree  
 in the handwriting of the pious Mâr Tûmârşâ, the  
 Catholicus and Patriarch, and [to this decree] did all  
 the brethren, and the Bishops, and the Metropolitans  
 set their hands, hand after hand, one after | his fellow, Fol. 71 a  
 and the Patriarch sealed this [writing] and placed it  
 in the hand of Rabban Hôrmîzd, and the holy man  
 gave it unto George his steward.

And it came to pass after all these things had taken place in this wise, on that same evening, when it was late, they set a feast on the board, and one broke bread and blessed, and they [all] began to partake of the feast with joy and gladness, together with Rabban and the Patriarch; and when they had finished [eating at] the table, and had risen up therefrom, Khôdâhwî, the son of Shubhhî, of Kôpâ brought unto them [wine to] drink, and they drank together with joy therefrom, each man three cups,<sup>1</sup> according to the command of Abba Isaiah the monk. And moreover, he set a talent of silver before the Patriarch, saying,

<sup>1</sup> Literally, “in three cups.”

“Take these moneys from the hands of thy disciple “Khôdâhwî, the son of Shubhhi, of Kôpâ, that they “may serve for thy use and for the expenses of thy “journey, O master.” Then [Page 89] Mâr Patriarch looked upon the believing man Khôdâhwî and blessed him, and he said unto him, “The burden which we “have laid upon thee yesterday, this day, and now, “is sufficient for thee, according to what we have “heard, and the true believers have related unto us “concerning thee, and concerning thy watchful care

Fol. 71 b “and the strenuousness | of thy mind towards Rabban “and his holy house. Now, as far as it concerneth “us, such large moneys as these are of no use unto “us, and if thou art willing take back thy money, O “our brother, to thyself; that which I possess is suf-“ficient for me.” Then this believing man constrained him, saying, “What I have vowed unto thee [I have “vowed]. I must pay unto the Lord my vows, and “this money belongeth unto thee and unto the Lord, “and it cannot return unto my habitation. Master, “thy servant hath possessions in abundance, and they “are sufficient for me; only accept thou a talent [of “silver] from what I have.” And having been con-strained to do so by this believing man the Patriarch accepted the money at his hand, and laid [it] before himself.

### CHAPTER XIX.

Of the gift to the Catholicus from Khôdâhwî after the manner of a blessing.

[Thus Khôdâhwî gave] of his own possessions an-  
other talent. And the Patriarch called Gabriel and

George, the guardians of the monastery of Rabban, and said unto them, "Take this money, and let it "[serve] for the expenses of the monastery, and for "such things as are lacking therein;" and these stewards accepted the money at the hands of the pious Patriarch, and they did therewith according as they had been commanded. And on the morning of the next day Tûmârsâ the Patriarch set out early on his journey, and Rabban accompanied him as far as our Lord gave him strength, and he [only] ceased from walking when he | was unable to go down with him Fol. 72 a another step; and there they were blessed by each other, and they gave each other the salutation of peace with a holy kiss and separated. Then Rabban returned to his cave, his soul being filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Now when that Satan which belonged to the idol [of Mattai] and which led [men] into error, had been driven forth from his place, [Page 90] and had been put to open shame, he breathed forth loud threats of vengeance, and stirred up against Rabban all the heretics who lived round about him, and the heretics, and their chief men who were *marbôsê*,<sup>1</sup> and also the "shorn" monks who were in all their monasteries.

<sup>1</sup> *مَرْبُوشَة*. The exact meaning of this word is doubtful; it occurs again on p. 135. The *Marbôsê* were probably Jacobite landed proprietors.

## CHAPTER XX.

Of the drowning of twenty heretics, and of the deliverance of Pithiōn, the Nestorian boatman, who was master of the ferry-boat.<sup>1</sup>

Now therefore there was assembled against Rabban a secret council in the city of Mâwsel, and on this account the [members thereof] collected ten talents of silver, saying, “Let us strive to slay him and [to “work] the destruction of his soul. For it is this man “who hath uprooted our monasteries, and defiled our “altars, and overturned from their foundations our “temples, and thrown down our sanctuaries; there-“fore let us deal wisely also in [working] his destruc-“tion, even as he hath acted cunningly in bringing “about our overthrow. And, if it should happen that “we be taken prisoners by the governor because of “his death, let us weigh out to him his weight of “gold; but let us destroy Rabban because he hath “made inroads into our monasteries after the manner “of a tyrant, and hath swept away our congrega-“tions in a pitiless manner. Let us destroy this man |

Fol. 72 b “from our dominion [at once], so that he may not lay “waste all [our] monasteries, lest his Son of man, “Jesus, Who hath become God, according to what

<sup>1</sup> Κιαστό = *χέρχουρος*, قرْشُور, *i.e.*, the comparatively flat-bottomed boats with high bows which have been used to ferry passengers across the Tigris from time immemorial. The boat is usually filled with sheep, donkeys, baggage of all kinds, and often camels; the woman crouch in the bottom of the boat, and the men sit along the sides, and assist the owner of the craft with counsels of a conflicting character.

“he saith, come and deliver him out of our hands.” But these men of strife did not know that the sword of Jesus was whetted for their slaughter, and that the spear of the Lord was ready to transfix them. And there gathered together of their chief men eight *marbōsē*,<sup>1</sup> and seven “shorn” monks, and five young men, and they went forth from the city of Mâwsel secretly, before the men of the same faith as Rabban knew about them or could plot their destruction; but they stole away and went forth two by two, and three by three, to cross the river Tigris, that they might go up to Rabban under a pretence of peace,<sup>2</sup> and might stretch out their hands upon him and slay him. “And if,” [said they] “we be taken prisoners by the ‘governor we will give unto him whatever [Page 91] we ‘are called upon to give, and we shall escape.”

And it came to pass that in this murderous mind, and with this deadly intent, they embarked in the ferry-boat to cross the river and to go to the holy man that they might destroy him utterly; now the master of the ferry-boat in which they had embarked was a Christian, and he belonged to the orthodox faith.<sup>3</sup> And when the boat had gone a little distance in the waters of the Tigris, | and they had come into Fol. 73 a deep water, the boat stood still in the midst of the

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, “ambush of peace.”

<sup>3</sup> The writer, of course, means that the boatman was a Nestorian. It is a fact to this day that most of the good boatmen on the Tigris are Nestorians, and most of those who form the crews of the river steamers come from Tell Kêf and the immediate neighbourhood of Mâwsel.

water, and it would go neither forwards nor backwards.<sup>1</sup> Then was Pîthîôn, the master of the boat, much troubled, and he began to cry out in his faith to the holy man [Rabban] to help him, saying, “O “help me, ye saints of our Lord, in this season of “great tribulations, for our trust is [fixed] upon God “and upon His saints.” And again he cried out, and said, “O God of Rabban Hôrmîzd, help Thou me in “this time of my affliction through the prayers of “Rabban Hôrmîzd, the glorious man.” And the Lord heard the prayer of Pîthîôn the boatman, and He sent His angel, in the form of Rabban Hôrmîzd, to help him, and Rabban appeared unto him sitting above the sail<sup>2</sup> of the boat; and whilst Pîthîôn the boatman was wondering at the sight of the old man, who seemed to be made of fire, he took in his right hand the rudder of the boat, and turned the boat upside down, and thus he utterly destroyed all the men in the waters of the river. Now when the boat had gone back a little in the water and it was still floating upside down, suddenly that old man made it to

Fol. 73 b right itself, and to take its | former position; and to Pîthîôn, the old boatman, there came no harm, and not one piece of tackle nor any block which was used in the working of the boat was lost, for the old man, who seemed to be of fire, was taking great care of the boat, which he was guarding like the apple of

<sup>1</sup> I. e., the boatman had run his boat on a mud bank. He next turned the boat broadside on to the current which runs strongly at Mâwsel, when it was at once capsized by the united strength of the wind and current. I have seen this happen more than once.

<sup>2</sup> αὐτὸς = ἡρμενον.

the eye. Then the angelic man made Pîthîôn the old boatman to hear with his natural senses these words, saying, "Hearken, O Pîthîôn the boatman, I have "delivered thee from all this destruction [Page 92] with "these wicked men, and have not destroyed thee along "with them, because thou didst make me thy place "of refuge, and didst call upon me; moreover, I did "answer thee since thou didst call upon me, Rabban "Hôrmîzd. These men who have perished in the "waters, and whom I have drowned by the grace of "our Lord, went forth and came to slay me; but thee "have I made to escape out of their hands, and I have "not made thee to perish in the manner in which they "have perished. Therefore glorify thy God, O thou "old man Pîthîôn, because the Lord did not shew "Himself longsuffering in respect of them, and be- "cause He hath brought upon them a terrible doom." And an account of this wonderful thing was written [and sent] throughout all the country which was round about them; thus the Lord protected and made His friend to triumph by means of such things as these, and by others which were like unto them.

Fol. 74 a

And this old man [Rabban] was hot with zeal against the heretics, and he burned with fervent desire for the utter destruction of their worship of error. And he besought our Lord, and made supplication unto Him in his prayer, saying, "O Lord Jesus Christ, "Thou true and beloved Son, Thou Light of light "Who hast destroyed the darkness of error out of "the world and hast illumined it with the light of Thy "Godhead, grant Thou unto me rational and spiritual "might that I may go into the dark chambers of the

“hidden things of the children of darkness, and may  
 “be able by the power which [I shall receive] from  
 “Thee to make to be of none effect the error, which  
 “[is contained] in the books [of the heretics] that have  
 “been written by the finger of iniquity and [composed  
 “by] sinful meditation, wherein is buried the medicine  
 “of death (*i. e.*, poison); in Thy Father, and by Thy  
 “Spirit, and by Thy feeble servant, let Thy holy name  
 “be glorified, Amen.”

## CHAPTER XXI.

### Of the destruction of the books of sorcery of the heretics.

And when Rabban had made an end of his prayer the salutation of peace was given unto him by a spiritual being, and an angel took him by his right hand, and said unto him, “Peace, O Rabban ; peace, O Rabban ;” and having smitten his wings of the spirit together, with one stroke he set Rabban immediately at the [Page 93] door of the tavern of Mattai, and then removed himself therefrom and stood opposite [to Rabban]. And Rabban prayed with many sad

Fol. 74 b and | sorrowful tears, and made supplication concerning the error of the sons of the deceiver. Then the spiritual being made answer unto him in a figurative manner,<sup>1</sup> [saying], “I do not desire the death of a “sinner, but that he should repent of his iniquity, and “live.<sup>2</sup> If he repenteth in truth, [well] ; and if he doth

<sup>1</sup> Or, in a manner which could be understood by the senses.

<sup>2</sup> Ezekiel XXXIII. 11.

“not, what then?” These things were revealed after the manner of a mystery in that divine understanding, [as if to say], “They will not turn from their evil “ways and do the things which are good, for they “have learned to commit wickedness.” And it came to pass that when the evening had come, and every man had returned unto his habitation and was asleep, the holy man again prayed unto our Lord that He would give him the victory in the matter on account of which the mercy of heaven had led his steps thither, and which it had summoned him [to do], and that he might be delivered from the baleful attacks of the devils which were stirring up war against the holy men of God. Now therefore the holy, spiritual being opened before him the gates which were fastened carefully, and he led him from place to place through the dark and secret chambers [of the monastery] until he set him at the door of the room where the books of the calumniators [of God] were kept, and he went before him, and opened it and said unto him, “Behold, “O thou zealous man of Christ, take the things of “the spirit, and make thyself rich [therewith].” And the blessed man went about hither and thither in the room in which the books | of the deceiver were kept, Fol. 75 a and he prayed unto our Lord that peradventure He might make him wise [to bring about] the violent destruction of the books of the deceiver, and as he was praying there a small fountain of water welled up for Rabban in the room in which he was standing, and the waters thereof were thick by nature and stinking in smell; and Rabban knew that the waters which bubbled up from that fountain were akin unto

the stinking offal<sup>1</sup> of the body. [Page 94] Then straight-way in the strength of the zeal of a zealous man he took the books which were arranged in rows in the library, and he befouled them with the water, and dipped them in it, and they were at once destroyed and were fit for nothing whatsoever; and when Rabban had thus done unto all those books, and had made an end [of the doing], the fountain of water which had welled up suddenly ceased to flow. And Rabban prayed again unto our Lord, and that angel who had already carried him seized him and bore him away from that place to the outside of the gate of the monastery of the deceiver.

And the soul of the righteous man was crying out to him through sickness (*or*, sorrow), and he was asking of our Lord release from this world. Then he heard a voice which could be perceived by the senses from the heights of heaven, saying, "Fear not, O My  
 Fol. 75 b "servant Hôrmîzd, | for the completion of thy strife, "and the end of thy days shall be granted unto "thee;" and at this voice which could be perceived by the senses his holy soul was filled with the spirit of Divine Grace. And suddenly his understanding was seized and carried away with wonderment at God, and with the sight of the Holy Trinity, and with heavenly contemplation, and moreover, it was then revealed unto him on what day his departure from this world of labours and afflictions unto the place of divine rest and delight, and to the Jerusalem of the

<sup>1</sup> **رَكْد** *tellâ*, filth, dung, the offal of fish, and the like; see Duval, *Lexicon*, col. 2094; and Manna, *Vocabulaire*, p. 853.

holy firstborn, should take place. And the delights of the new world were made known in his mind in a secret and mysterious manner, according to that sublime gift which had been given unto him by our Lord from the time of his youth and up to that day, and thereby had he become renewed and had gained the strength of his youth again, and thereby had he trafficked and gotten gain, and he had become a new and perfect man in Jesus Christ, in the likeness of his creator. Now this complete perfection was renewed each and every day in this holy and blessed old man, even as the eagle which is renewed [in strength daily]; these are the firstborn sons of heaven who have been sealed with the seal of the Lordship of Jesus, Who is the Master of many brethren.

[Page 95]

## CHAPTER XXII.

## Rabban Hormizd and Ignatius the sorcerer.

Now therefore, after | our Lord had wrought in this <sup>Fol. 76 a</sup> wise by means of Rabban in the house of the deceiver, in the monastery of him that leadeth into error, who, as I have said above, was dwelling in that wretched little idol, which they (*i. e.*, the heretics) were worshipping secretly, He was making manifest the more in Ignatius, the head of that monastery, the strength of his error. For it was he who was offering up offerings continually in his cell, at one time birds, at another kids and sheep, at another cats and apes, at another medicines<sup>1</sup> in the censers; and he was slaug-

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, magical drugs.

tering and offering up sacrifices and libations to the devil that was a deceiver. Now this devil of error used to make Ignatius to have triumph in many ways before kings and governors ; sometimes after the manner of a prophet he would reveal things unto him before they took place, and at others he would send forth the fame of the name of Ignatius before the multitude, and proclaim him to be a holy man, and also make manifest that he wrought divine, mighty deeds ; in this wise the error became greatly noised abroad.

Then that devil who was a deceiver answered and said unto him, "O Ignatius, my friend, why is thine 'heart so overwhelmed that thou dost not know what 'hath been happening in thy monastery during these 'days?" And the sorcerer Ignatius said unto him, "I  
 Fol. 76 b "know not what | thou sayest now ; but this thing  
 "I know, I have not seen thee performing anything  
 "whatsoever in this monastery for very many days  
 "past. The storehouse (*or, bin*) for the corn is empty,  
 "the flask hath no oil therein, the wine skins have  
 "dried up because they never have any wine in them,  
 "there are no congregations, the women go not up  
 "[to the shrine], the brethren<sup>1</sup> rejoice not, the treasury  
 "is wholly empty of money, and, behold, our bread-  
 "cake<sup>2</sup> which was wont to warm the bosoms of those  
 "who ate it is now cold and dried up. Wherein have  
 "we neglected thee? What sin have we committed  
 "against thee that thou shouldst [Page 96] be unmindful

<sup>1</sup> The diminutive is used here, of course, as a mark of contempt.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, the sacramental bread.

“of us in thy forgetfulness? Behold, we lay incense  
“before thee, but why do the congregations resist  
“thee? Behold, the brethren love thee, and worship  
“thee! Behold, we and our old men strip ourselves  
“naked and stand before thee for thy gratification!  
“What thing have we diminished of the honour which  
“is due unto thee, or in what way have we failed to  
“gratify thee wholly, that thou hast not appeared unto  
“us during this [long] time which is past?” Then the  
deceiving devil said unto him, “I entreat thee to  
“examine thyself a little as to why I have not ap-  
“peared before thee in these [last] days.” And Ignatius  
said unto him, “Yea, get thee into the house of thy  
“Mattai, for I have [left] a little of the oil | of the Fol. 77 a  
“lamp which burneth before him, and come to me.”

And Ignatius went forth in great haste from before his master the deceiving devil, and went, according to his wont, to enter in before the shrine of the holy man Mâr Mattai, but through the care of Divine Providence he was not permitted to do so; and he did thus once, twice, and thrice, but he was not able to enter therein. And being put to shame he came unto his foul devil, and fell down and worshipped him, saying, “Reveal unto me, O thou deceiving one, why “I have not been permitted to go into the shrine of “Mâr Mattai.” And that deceiving devil said unto him, “I have already told thee that thou didst not know “what hath happened in thy monastery during these “[last] days;” then Ignatius said, “What hath hap-  
“pened? Tell me.” And the deceiving devil said, “Hôrmîzd, the Nestorian, came with his devils craftily, “and entered by night into the room where Mattai

“abideth, and he hath stolen and carried off that  
“image of mine which was there; and then, perceiv-  
“ing through my image that I had been carried off  
“from there through your negligence, I became angry  
“with you, and I departed from you. Now the brother  
Fol. 77 b “of that image also, | when he heard what had been  
“done to his fellow, became furiously angry, and he  
“watched his brother’s place, and would not allow  
“[Page 97] you to enter therein and inherit the shrine  
“of his brother; but as ye were neglectful of his  
“brother, and his shrine and his image had been  
“carried off, he also, very justly, drove you forth  
“from his house and cast you away from before his  
“face, because ye had made him a stranger unto his  
“house and the house of his master. Thou seest,  
“Ignatius, that Mattai, in whom ye boast, hath in no  
“wise benefited you, for that deceiver Hôrmîzd, the  
“sorcerer, came and plundered his house and his  
“shrine, and he hath robbed him of his power and  
“carried [it] off, and he hath stolen the riches which  
“were hidden in my shrine there. But what is worse  
“for you is this. When I had gone afar off from you,  
“and from your monastery, the sorcerer Hôrmîzd  
“stripped me of my might and of my power of work-  
“ing, and he came back to you secretly, having put  
“on as a garment the devil of his pride, and with  
“his devils going on in front of him in their glory,  
“until he arrived in the insolence of his mind, with  
“the glory of his legions, and he went into your lib-  
Fol. 78 a “rary, | and by the operation of his sorceries he im-  
“pudently defaced and destroyed with stinking matter  
“the Holy Scriptures, because ye never toiled at my

“book and ye have made them to perish. My friends  
“and my companions who have lived in all genera-  
“tions have, through the Holy Spirit which I breathed  
“into them, set down in writing my triumphant acts  
“according as I taught them, and ye, through your  
“negligence, have been wholly unmindful of them;  
“and that sorcerer Hôrmîzd hath had envy of them,  
“and [now] he hath destroyed them wholly and  
“utterly through the operation of his sorceries. Go,  
“Ignatius, and see the overthrowings which have  
“been caused by the sorcerer Hôrmîzd.”

And behold, when Ignatius had gone to his own library and had seen that it was even as his deceiving devil had said unto him, straightway he fell into great heaviness and bitterness of spirit; and he cried unto his devils secretly, and to his legions of “shorn” monks openly, and he made known unto them what had happened unto them through the two [calamities] which had befallen them, [Page 98] and which are written above, and they were greatly moved and were smitten with consternation in their hearts. Then was Ignatius made wise by his devils, and he told the deacon of the community, and they kneaded dough in the monastery, and baked bread which they fashioned in the form of the bread-cake of the deceiver; | and <sup>Fol. 78 b</sup> when it was [still] burning hot, the devils took it and made it to fly swiftly through the air until they set it down at the door of the sleeping chamber of the governor of Mâwsel.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Of the coming of the accursed Ignatius to Mâwsel, and of the sorcery which he wrought [there].

And inasmuch as the governor of the city of Mâwsel was a friend of Ignatius, his servants went in and informed him concerning [his arrival], and the governor commanded quickly that he should go into his presence; and when Ignatius had gone in the governor gave him the salutation of peace, and gave the order, and made him to sit down by his side in honour. Then Ignatius set the bread, which was still hot, before him, saying, "I have brought this bread as a blessing "for thee from my monastery;" and the governor, who was making merry with him, said unto him, "Give me a little of that bread of thy monastery as "a blessing;" and Ignatius stretched out [his hand] and gave him one bread-cake. And, behold, the governor perceived that the bread was hot like the oven it came from, and he cried out, and said, "Oh! "this bread is still hot." Then Ignatius said unto him, "O my lord the governor, I have only just brought "it from within the oven of my monastery", and the governor wondered at this thing; now several times before Ignatius had made him to wonder at his sorceries, and the governor was wont to declare that

Fol. 79 a he was a holy man. Then having | come to the matter of his sorceries, Ignatius made bitter complaints against the holy man Rabban Hôrmîzd, and calumniated him, saying, "His sorceries are more in number than those of all the sorcerers who have ever

“lived or now live, and he hath wrought many evil things [Page 99] upon our monastery, and [committed] many thefts ; and we also ask thee to have mercy upon thy servants, and to avenge the cause of thy servant Ignatius, and the cause of all thy servants who are the sons of my monastery.”

And because the governor was led captive by the devils of the deceiver, and was under subjection to his bread-cake, he hearkened unto the devil, and unto the evil things which he sowed in his heart ; and the governor burned with desire for the destruction of Rabban. Then, having made hot the mind of the governor in the oven of his own wrath, Ignatius said unto him, “O my lord, I entreat thee that I may declare unto thee all my desire concerning the sorcerer Hôrmîzd : I would that he and I might enter into judgment to-morrow before thee, and before all “the assembly of thy city ;” thereupon the governor hearkened unto Ignatius, and [promised] to perform [his] desire in this matter. And the governor straightway sent for Rabban five horsemen and five runners, and they came to the place where he was at the time of sunset, and the horsemen made haste and brought him down quickly ; and Rabban took a mule from the village of Al-Kôsh to ride upon, | for he was unable Fol. 79 b. to walk, and ten of the brethren of the monastery went down with him, but they knew nothing of the reason why the governor had sent for him. Now the governor who had known Rabban had departed from the city, and another, whose name was ‘Ali, had come [in his place] ; and he had no child except an only son who was thirteen years old, and who was vexed

by an evil devil. And Ignatius had worked his sorceries upon the youth many times, but he was not healed, although day by day he used to make the governor to be confident of the healing of his son; but the cure of the youth continued to be far off from the sorcerer Ignatius. And by his crafty devices he used to strike wonder into the governor day after day by his sorceries, and he would make his devils to fly about in the air [seated] upon seats of fire which emitted sparks of light. And for this reason [Page 100] he worked in this wise by the crafts and wiles of his devils, and said to the governor, "Gather "together unto me the multitudes of thy city to-mor- "row, and to-morrow I will shew my glory<sup>1</sup> unto thee "in the air, that is to say, in the sight of those multi-  
Fol. 80 a "tudes | that they may praise him, [and confess] that "he is great, and also that he is worthy of praise." But the devil did not know that the sword of Jesus was whetted, and made ready and was prepared for the slaughter of his swinish nature, and that in course of time<sup>2</sup> [instead of] "praise", forsooth, he would receive the decree of doom from the Most High in return for his sorcery, for he had dared to attack Rabban, and had spoken falsehood against His holy man; [and he know not] that the height of his boasting would be brought low through His saint Rabban Hôr- mîzd, and that his lying nature and craftiness would be laid bare before God.

Now the horsemen were journeying along the road

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, the being to whom I ascribe glory.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, "from his time to his time".

with Rabban, and before it was light in the morning, that is to say, whilst it was still dark, they arrived at the river Tigris, and at that time [of the day] they could not find the ferry-boat which should take them over to the side where the city was. And Rabban made over the waters of the river the sign of the Cross three times, and, in the Name of Jesus the Nazarene, walked upon the waters of the river Tigris as upon dry land ; then he stood up opposite to the horsemen, and cried out to them, “Come, O ye horsemen, come, O ye children of the portion of Ignatius “the sorcerer, can it be that the deceiving devil who “is the friend of | Ignatius hath not told him not to Fol. 80 b “draw nigh unto the consuming fire ? Can it be that “the deceiving devil hath not preserved his friend-“ship for Ignatius, who hath been wont to offer up “sacrifices unto him as the confession of faith of his “wretched soul ?” Let iniquity come upon you, O devils, ye crafty devils, because ye do not preserve sufficient love and friendship, even for your friends and those who worship you, [to warn them] when the decree of doom from the Most High is about to come upon them, and because it is through you that your friends receive the punishments of heaven—even as happened in that day to Ignatius the sorcerer !

[Page 101] And when the day had dawned and the light had become bright, the horsemen found the ferry-boat and crossed over therein, and the brethren also who were with Rabban crossed over with them to the other side of the river Tigris. Then Rabban encouraged the brethren who had come with him, and said unto them, “Be not sorrowful, O my brethren, and

“despair not, for I have received [news] from our “Lord that the man of iniquity is this day about to “receive the punishment of death from our Lord, and “that his sins and iniquities have invited him to the “slaughter of his swinish and iniquitous person.” Now when the horsemen had taken Rabban and his  
 Fol. 81 a companions | and had entered into the city of Mâwsel, and the governor had been told that Rabban had arrived, he commanded that they should come in before him ; and as soon as Rabban entered and gave the salutation of peace to him, the governor was greatly moved at the awfulness of his visage, wherefrom there streamed forth divine fire. Then by reason of the fear and great consternation which had seized upon him, the governor stood up upon his feet, and returned to the holy man the salutation of peace with honour and affection, and he made him to sit at his right hand, and enquired of him concerning his age ;<sup>1</sup> and when Rabban had made answer unto him, he greatly marvelled at his wisdom, and gentleness, and humility, and self-restraint, and serene disposition. And the governor answered and said unto the crowds that were gathered together about him, “Verily this man “is the faithful servant of God, for his service unto his “Lord is well known from the appearance of his face.”

And behold, the phantoms<sup>2</sup> of darkness of Ignatius had been evoked in the air, and whilst he was seeking to make a display of himself with his evil spirits  
 Fol. 81 b and fiends—now he was wont to say | that he was

<sup>1</sup> Literally, “the depth of his years.”

<sup>2</sup> **ରାତ୍ରିବୁଦ୍ଧି** are “bats”; the gloss reads “flyers by night”.

carried aloft through the air by the holy angels—the fiends seized the devil (Ignatius), and placed him in [Page 102] mid-air. Then suddenly Rabban strung his bow, and placed the arrow of deliverance upon the string which had been given by grace, and therewith he transfixed the iniquitous one and his legions, saying, “It is not for you, O ye deceivers, to deliver your “wills unto the soul’s desire of the iniquitous one, “nay, by Jesus Christ the Nazarene, I set a bond “upon you, and ye shall remain in the air in the po-“sitions in which ye now are, until I set you free from “the bond wherewith I have bound you;” and there-  
upon, by Divine Providence, the devils stood in mid-air perforce and against their own wills. And as soon as the devil Ignatius saw that the wheels of the course of his sorcery had become useless, and that the Divine Will had gained the dominion [over him], and that the sword of the punishment of the Most High was in Its hand, and also that the penalty and retribution for his sinfulness had drawn nigh, he began to ascribe woe to himself. And he cried out in mid-air, saying, “Woe is me! What hath befallen me through my sins “which have overtaken me? And I am powerless to “escape from the cruel circle of thy prayer, O Rabban “Hôrmîzd. Woe is me! O Rabban, I repent of the “sinfulness in which I was held fast, and I will become “a sincere penitent | through thee, O thou holy man, Fol. 82 a “Rabban Hôrmîzd, Let not thy Lord reject me as a “penitent, even as Thy Lord did not reject the holy “man Cyprian,’ the sorcerer, for when he repented

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the magician of Antioch who repented, and embraced

“sincerely the Lord accepted him with all His heart, “and Cyprian became an advocate for the afflicted, “and a refuge for those who were in trouble, and “who fled to him for help.”

And because the soul of Rabban was filled with mercy and compassion, his mercy rolled upon him that was crying out and weeping bitterly, and straightway he turned his face to the East, and prayed on his behalf with pain and tears, that, peradventure, he might be accepted, and be pardoned his sins, and might live; but Divine righteousness did not will to accept him, since he had not repented sincerely and with his own heart, but only because he had at that moment been seized [Page 103] by the devouring [jaws] of justice. For however long justice had been silent and motionless, yet it was now roused up, and it was neither silent nor motionless [in exacting] vengeance on the devil. Now Rabban knew these things by means of a revelation from the Holy Spirit, which said, “Repentance befitteth not the devil, but only a “punishment such as will be helpful to him.” Then the blessed man rose up from his prayer being sorrowful, and his soul was suffering pain because of the destruction of that devil. And because he had

Fol. 82 b not the | means to do that which he had learned from the indication [given] by heaven, the holy man looked up into heaven, and said, “O our Lord Jesus Christ, “Who art merciful and compassionate, shew mercy “unto me [in the matter of] this wretched devil, and

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Christianity, and was martyred at Damascus in the reign of Decius or Diocletian.

"although his end must come by the death of his body through a punishment of this kind, do Thou make his soul to live on the day of Thy revelation, 'O our Lord Jesus Christ.' Then the holy man answered and told the guardian angel [who was] with him (*i. e.*, Ignatius) to desist from his care of him, and as soon as the angel had gone away from him, he commanded the fiends [which held him] to drop him down from the heights of air into the deepest depth, and the fiends did as they were commanded by Rabban. And straightway he fell down, and his bowels were rent asunder, and the men of his faith took up his body and buried it; as the Arians did who gathered up the portions of the body of Arius' to bury him, even so did the sons of these [heretics].

And when 'Ali the governor saw this wonderful thing which Rabban Hôrmîzd had wrought, he brought his son, who was vexed by an evil devil, before the holy man, and said unto him, "Lay thou thy right hand upon the head of this my son so that the fiend 'may flee out of him ;'" and Rabban did according to what the governor had said | unto him, and the devil went forth from the young man. And the devil cried out, and said, "Woe is me ! Fie<sup>2</sup> upon thee, "O son [Page 104] of Persians ! Cursed be Persia, and

<sup>1</sup> Of the manner of his death Socrates says (*Hist. Eccles.*, 1. 38) :—  
“Soon after a faintness came over him, and together with the eva-  
“cuations his bowels protruded, followed by a copious haemorrhage,  
“and the descent of the smaller intestines ; moreover portions of his  
“spleen and liver were brought off in the effusion of blood, so that  
“he almost immediately died.”

"every thing which she hath sent upon us through "thee!" And suddenly the devil flew into the air, and he was never again [seen]. Then 'Ali embraced Rabban again, and said unto him, "In truth I understand now that thou art the faithful servant of God, "and that thou acceptest not the person of any man; "thy Lord hath indeed judged Ignatius the sorcerer, "although thou didst pray to thy Lord that he might "live; but he did not live because thy Lord, according to His will, desired his death more than his life."

Then Rabban went out of the city of Mâwsel in unspeakable triumph, and by his means Divine Grace wrought many wonderful triumphs, besides the healing of the son of the governor of the city of Mâwsel, and many other similar healings which can neither be described nor written down in this history lest it become [too] long and the reader thereof become exhausted.<sup>1</sup> Now when Rabban and his companions went forth from the city of Mâwsel, they did so by night, secretly, and without any man knowing of their going forth, [and they did so] because of the mighty crowds of people which were thronging him; and he arrived at the waters of the Tigris, and he walked

Fol. 83b upon this | liquid substance<sup>2</sup> as upon dry land.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### The Death of Rabban Hôrmîzd.

And when he had arrived at his monastery, and had gone into his cave, and had rested himself from

<sup>1</sup> For ~~سَوْدَن~~ read ~~سَوْدَن~~; the mistake is mine.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, "fluid nature."

the toil of his journey, the ship of his soul began to enter into the haven of the kingdom on high. And he called unto Gabriel his servant, and said unto him, "My son Gabriel, knowest thou that the day wherein "I shall sleep with my fathers draweth nigh, and that "I am going to travel the road of all the earth and "all the world? My son, gather the whole brother- "hood together;" and they smote the board for sum- moning the brethren, and they were all gathered to- gether unto him. Then he said unto them, "O my "beloved brethren, the time when I shall be set free "from the body] hath arrived. I have finished my "course, I have kept the faith, and according to my "thoughts there is laid up for me a crown of righteous- "ness, not for me only, but also for those who have "embraced the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, "which is from heaven. Ye have heard [Page 105] of "my career of contendings—now I speak only to in- "cite you thereto, and I seek not to boast myself— "in fasting and in prayer, in vigil and in self-denial, "in strict abstinence and in austere life, in cold and "in heat, in hunger and in thirst, in the cruel stripes "which were inflicted by rebellious devils, | in deadly Fol. 84 a "punishments of various kinds, and divers [calamities "arising] from sufferings, and wars, and hateful and "abominable fiends, in the wants which arose through "heretics, and in wants which arose through lying "brethren. Now therefore, O my brethren and sons, "take heed unto yourselves, and be strong in your "faith, and also in your doctrine which ye have heard "from me during the whole of the time which I have "been with you and unto this present; O my beloved,

“keep ye these things and do [them] unto the end  
 “in the good hope of your sure faith, and fight ye  
 “the good fight of the faith of Jesus Christ. If now  
 “ye thus keep your souls, it shall be the redemption  
 “of your lives—for ye know that such is the will of  
 “God, good, acceptable, and perfect. I am a feeble  
 “man, but do ye, my sons, fight and bear yourselves  
 “strenuously in performing the work of God. Ye shall  
 “not possess either gold or silver, but ye shall keep  
 “these things that ye may inherit for yourselves the  
 “benefit of life; and may our Lord Himself, in His  
 “grace, glorify you, and guide you into the straight  
 “road of His saints, and may He mercifully lead you  
 “on your way until ye attain unto that [perfection] |  
 Fol. 84 b “for the sake of which Christ, in His grace and mercy,  
 “followed after you. Amen.”

Then Rabban stretched out his holy hands in prayer, and said, “O good Lord, Merciful Father, Who alone “hast care for the redemption of the race of the “children of men, have compassion on Thy servant, “and by Thy grace remove the sins, follies, and weak-“nesses of him, myself, for I have sinned before Thee “[Page 106] all the days of my life. Thou knowest that “I am clothed with a frail nature, and although I am “unworthy, receive Thou my spirit from me in peace, “[and let it abide] with those upon whom Thy com-“passion hath shewn mercy, O Father, Son, and Holy “Spirit. Amen.” And again he answered and said [unto the brethren], “Remain ye in peace”, and then he shut his eyes and held his peace; and he opened his eyes once more, and sealed the company of his sons with the sign of the Cross three times, and said,

“Remain ye in threefold peace”; and died. Then there came down the hosts of light, and the legions of the spirit, and the angelic beings in their grades and ranks, and surrounded that holy body; and there breathed forth from him the sweet odour of spiritual beings, and the brethren were not able to draw nigh unto that holy body for a space of about two hours, <sup>Fol. 85 a</sup> until the beautiful odour of the angels had departed, when they all drew nigh and fell upon the body of their holy father; and the voice of their weeping went forth for a long time. And the multitudes of the spiritual beings accompanied the soul of the blessed man with the sweet sounds and the sublime words of their praises until they had made it to take up its abode in the Eden of the Paradise of God, where [abide] the spirits of the just men who have been made perfect. And the report of the death of the righteous man was heard in the cities of Bâlâdh, and Mâwsel, and Ma'allâthâ, and in the countries round about his monastery; and great and uncountable multitudes of people from these countries gathered together, and his sons, and the bishops, and priests, and deacons, and a congregation of believing men extolled him for three days and three nights, and then they dug in the martyrium of the monastery a little cave in the rock and they laid him therein.<sup>1</sup> And he hath now become a fountain of help unto all those who take refuge in him in faith, and his

<sup>1</sup> The remains of Rabban Hôrmîzd are buried under the altar of the church dedicated to him; see my *Book of Governors*, vol. 1, p. CLXXI.

Fol. 85 *b* prayer is [Page 107] a strong rock unto all those | who take refuge in him in faith, and who call upon him when both near and afar off.

Now the blessed man had rest from his labour and trouble on the Second Day of the week which followeth the First Day of the third week of the Resurrection. And the years of the life of the blessed man upon earth were eighty and five years; [he lived] in the world, twenty years; in the Monastery of the holy man Rabban Bar-Idtâ, thirty-nine years; in the Monastery of Rîshâ, six years; and in his own monastery twenty-two years.<sup>1</sup> May God, Who made him to triumph in the height and in the depth, and in Whose Holy Church the beauty and splendour of his glorious and divine deeds and life have sent rays of light, make his praiseworthy, exalted, and sublime deeds to shine [with those] of the beings of the spirit. And let all those who have lived in the monastery in which he brought his noble life and deeds to an end find mercy and compassion before our Lord, and may they be worthy to enjoy happiness in the kingdom of heaven and the good things which never come to an end. And we make supplication unto Christ our Lord that He will make to rest upon his monastery the right hand of His Providence, and may the priests, and the believing men, and all sorts and conditions of men, | Fol. 86 *a* who have extolled our holy father with us in his commemoration this day, be preserved by his prayers from all the troubles and afflictions of disturbed times. And may all our congregation, both priests and be-

<sup>1</sup> But,  $20 + 39 + 6 + 22$  years = eighty-seven years.

lieving men, in the world which is to come and is for ever, enjoy his praises with the joys of the kingdom of heaven by the grace and by the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. And may praise ascend to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, from the two churches of spiritual beings and of beings who are in the flesh, now, and always, and for ever and ever. Amen.

[Page 108] Here endeth the history of the glorious life and deeds, and of the divine triumphs of the righteous anchorite, the true ascetic, the seraph in the flesh, Rabban Mâr Hôrmîzd the Persian. May his prayers be upon the whole world, from one end thereof even to the other. Yea and Amen.

COLOPHONS. — 1. This [copy of this] history was finished in the blessed | month Nîsân, on the second Fol. 86 b day, on the Fifth Day of Easter Week, of the year one thousand, eight hundred, and ninety-two of the Incarnation of our Lord and God Jesus Christ. Glory be unto Him that maketh times and seasons to pass away, whilst He Himself never, never passeth away. Yea and Amen.

2. [This copy] was written in the blessed village of Al-Kôsh, the village of Nahum the prophet, which is set, and built, and laid out by the side of the Monastery of Rabban Hôrmîzd the Persian ; may our Lord protect it by His mighty right hand. Yea and Amen.

3. [This copy] was written in the days of the Father of fathers, and the Chief of shepherds, and the Head

of all the churches, who bindeth on crowns, who anointeth priests, who fasteneth on girdles, who maketh [priests] to hold staves, who bestoweth ecclesiastical dignities, Mâr Ȅlîyâ the Thirteenth, the Catholicus and Patriarch of Babel of the East. May Christ our Lord establish his throne to the end of days through the prayer of the Apostles and Fathers. Yea and Amen.

Fol. 87 a 4. [Page 109] [This copy] was written by the hands of the feeble and sinful deacon, Ȅsâ, the son of Isaiah, the son of the deacon Cyriacus, from the village of Ekrôr which is in the country of the Sendâyê, and who hath his habitation at this time in the village of Al-Kôsh. I entreat the pious readers [of this history] to remember the scribe in their prayers which will be heard [by God] that, perhaps, compassion may be shewn unto him before the throne of Christ our Lord.

THE PRAISEWORTHY HISTORY OF OUR PIOUS AND HOLY  
FATHER, RABBAN BAR-‘IDTĀ, WHICH WAS COMPOSED BY THE  
PRIEST ABRAHAM AT THE REQUEST OF THE METROPOLITAN  
MÂR ‘ABHD-ISHÔ AND THAT OF THE PRIESTS AND DEACONS  
OF THE COMMUNITY OF BÉTH GHÛRBÂK.



### The Author's Declaration of his Belief.

[Page 113] IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE <sup>Fol. 1 a</sup> SON, AND OF THE SPIRIT; THREE PERSONS AND ONE NATURE;

ONE EVERLASTING ESSENCE; ONE SELF-EXISTENT BEING;

ONE CREATOR, ONE SELF-EXISTENT BEING, ONE GOD,

THE LORD OF ALL THINGS;

Who in His love and compassion created all things out of nothing;

5 God, the hidden self-existent One, Who possesseth Three co-equal Persons;

Essence, and Word, and Life, One Divine Nature;

Essence is called the Father, the Word Who [proceeded] from Him is a perfect Son.

His Life is called the Holy Spirit, a Nature simple and uncompounded;

Of the Essence of the Father His Word and His Life are not accidental qualities,

10 But they are Persons of His self-existent Being, One Nature, One God;

And as the Sun possesseth being, together with radiance and heat,

And is one nature and not three, even so is the self-existent One;

Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit, co-equal in Nature and in self-existence;

And in power, and in dominion, and in lordship, and in knowledge;

15 The Father of all is from all eternity, and the Son  
Fol. 1 b is born the Child | from all eternity,

And the Holy Spirit proceedeth [from the Father] from all eternity, [and they are] of the Nature of the Father, and are co-equal with Him;

The Father, and His Word, and His Life, are co-equal in Natures and Persons,

And they are co-equal in honour, and in strength, and in divinity, and in will.

History of the origin of the metrical version of the Life of Bar-'Idtâ.

[Page 114] BY THE MIGHT OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, HIS WORD, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, HIS LIFE,

20 ONE NATURE, THREE IN PERSON, THE LORD AND CREATOR OF THE WORLDS,

BY THE MERCY OF HIS LOVE, I DRAW NEAR, I THE FEEBLE ONE, WHO WORSHIP HIM,

ABRAHAM, THE MOST SINFUL OF MEN, FROM THE COUNTRY OF THE ZÂBHÂ' RIVER, BY NAME A PRIEST,

And I have gathered together diligently, and have composed most carefully,

<sup>1</sup> He was probably a native of Adiabene.

A discourse made of feeble words in the fourth tone,  
 25 On the praiseworthy history of our glorious and holy  
     father,  
 Rabban Bar-'Idtâ,<sup>1</sup> the chosen one, who is called the  
     “sun of the east”.  
 It hath been composed from a trustworthy discourse<sup>2</sup>  
     at the command of our honourable father,  
 Mâr 'Abhd-Îshô', the holy man, the Metropolitan | of Fol. 2 a  
     the country,  
 According to a request made to my simpleness by  
     the sons of the blessed [village of] Bêth Ghûrbâk,  
 30 The glorious and upright priests Rabban Shem'ôn,  
     and John,  
 And the priest 'Abhd-Îshô', and the distinguished  
     deacons,  
 And the rest of the community of the faithful of the  
     well-protected church of Bêth Ghûrbâk,  
 [Who] made this request of me because the [full]  
     history was [too] long,  
 And they were unable to read the whole of it to the  
     faithful on the day of his commemoration.  
 35 And on my part, I, the least among the followers of  
     Christ, and the most contemptible of the sons of  
     Adam,  
 Assented to the demand of my lords, and accepted  
     their beloved entreaty.

<sup>1</sup> He was a contemporary of Jacob of Bêth 'Âbhê, Babai of Nisibis (A. D. 569—628), Îshô'-yahbh of Arzôn, and many other famous ascetics; he must not be confounded with Bar-'Idtâ, a contemporary of Sahdônâ.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, he has based his discourse upon a trustworthy history.

Not because I am a scribe, or because I am a writer  
of books,

But in the love of Christ, I took upon myself the  
burden of their sweet love,

That perchance, by His love and mercy, and by the  
prayer of Rabban Bar-'Idtâ,

40 And by the prayers of the above-mentioned brethren,  
our Lord might strengthen and give me wisdom,

And that the Power which created everything, both  
that which [came into being] from something,  
and that which [came into being] from nothing,

Fol. 2 b Might, by the | prayers of the Apostles who loved  
His Name, dwell with me and bring [the work]  
to a conclusion.

[Page 115] Thy might, O Jesus Christ, my Lord, which  
gave life unto Lazarus and raised him up

I beseech to support and help the might of Thy ser-  
vant that it may not lack [understanding].

45 O ye brethren who believe truly, ye freeborn sons of  
Bêth Ghûrbâk,

Open unto me [your] ears with help, and the tried  
eyes of [your] heart[s],

That I may relate unto you openly the history of our  
father, the "sun of Âthôr",<sup>1</sup>

Rabban Bar-'Idtâ, the trumpet and the poet of the  
Holy Spirit.

This history of our pious and holy father, Rabban  
Bar-'Idtâ,

50 The chosen one, was composed by Mâr John,<sup>2</sup> his  
disciple.

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, the Nestorian diocese of Mâwsel.

<sup>2</sup> He was probably the author of the work which the priest Abra-

May the memory of Rabban Bar-'Idtâ be for blessing  
before the Lord,  
And may his prayers be upon us, for ever and ever!  
Yea and Amen.



**The Life of Bar-'Idtâ.**

On the banks of the river Euphrates, and in the province round about,

Is a village, the name of which is Raspâ, that is to say Rûşâpâ.<sup>1</sup>

55 And from this village, as we have learned, according to the genealogy of the world,

Sprang this our father, Mâr Bar-'Idtâ, the holy man.

He was descended from righteous, and good, and merciful parents | who were believers,

Fol. 3 a

And they possessed abundant riches, and goods, and great glory,

And he had a sister who was ten years older than he was :

60 Now she was the daughter of the father of the holy man, but not of his mother,

And when the holy man was only a few years old, His parents departed from the life of time unto that of the spirit,

ham turned into verse ; he flourished about A. D. 660, and was the author of lives of Abraham, Bar-'Idtâ, and Khôdâhwai, the founders respectively of the Monasteries of Mount Izlâ, Bar-'Idtâ, and Béth Hâlê. See Duval, *La Littérature syriaque*, p. 223.

<sup>1</sup> Probably the city in Mesopotamia which is also called Sergio-polis, after a certain Sergius who was martyred there with Bacchus and Leontius early in the IVth century.

And the two, the holy man and his sister, remained behind, and they had none other to share the inheritance with them.

Now the name of the holy woman who was the sister of the holy man was Hânâh-Îshô',

65 And she filled the place of a father and mother unto him.

She inclined not unto the flatteries of this transitory world,

And she cast behind her back the whole world, and the beauty thereof.

[Page 116] She fell not down through the obstacles of Satan, who leadeth men captive,

And she chose the better part, like Mary, the sister of Martha.

70 Her soul was weary of the world, and like Onesimus,<sup>1</sup> The young child, her brother, who as yet knew neither good nor evil,

Fol. 3 b She directed, and led him onwards to progress, | and helpful understanding.

Like Melania,<sup>2</sup> she not only raised herself up Out of the filthy mire of the world, but she made strong her brother also,

75 And she plucked two-fold excellence, for herself and for her brother,

And like one who receiveth a double crown she received perfection.

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, Onesima, the daughter of Antiochus the king; see Assemânî, *B. O.*, III. 1, p. 284, col. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Either the famous Roman lady who was born about A. D. 350 and died A. D. 410, or her grand-daughter who was born about A. D. 385, and died about A. D. 430.

Now although nature had endowed her with a beautiful and perfect form,  
 And a fair and lovely appearance, and a face like the sun,  
 To the Creator of her fair beauty she offered her beauty as an offering,  
 80 And she guarded the integrity of her virginity unto the wedding chamber of the grave.  
 What then [happened] after the death of their parents?  
 Certain men among her kinsfolk were looking to take the chaste woman to wife,  
 One for the sake of her great beauty, and another for her riches;  
 But when she learned this she left her country altogether,  
 85 Having sold everything which their parents had left them,  
 She distributed [the money] among the poor, and the widows, and the monasteries, and the churches,  
 According to the command of Christ our Lord, Who in His Gospel commanded His friends, | [saying,] <sup>Fol. 4 a</sup>  
 "Sell all your possessions, and give them as gifts to the wretched and the needy."<sup>1</sup>  
 But she left a little of the money for the rearing of her beloved brother.  
 90 Then she renounced her human kin, and went away from her acquaintances,  
 And taking hold of the hands of the saint, Rabban Bar-'Idtâ, her brother,

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew XIX. 21.

She came to the city of Nisibis,<sup>1</sup> that is to say Antioch of Mygdonia;

[Page 117] And in one of the convents for woman which are round about Sôbhâ,<sup>2</sup>

She entered and took the garb of the covenant with Christ, the Bridegroom of heaven.

95 And the chaste woman Hânâh-Îshô<sup>c</sup> established her brother Rabban Bar-'Idtâ

Near her, that is to say, she placed him in a school, That he might read the Psalms of David, and get hold upon the art of singing (*or*, reciting) words, And might write the letters and copy books, although he was still of tender years.

From evening until morning he lived in the house with his sister,

100 And in the day time she used to carry him with sweet, consoling words to school,

And every evening with great care she took him back to her house.

And every morning she would carry him to the house of instruction with watchfulness.<sup>3</sup>

And she was careful about him that he did not defile his youth by the habits,

Fol. 4 b Filthy, corrupt, | and abominable, of the children who loved nasty ways.

105 Sometimes she would frighten, and sometimes encourage and flatter him,

<sup>1</sup> A very ancient city of Mesopotamia which under the form "Nasib-na" is mentioned in the cuneiform inscriptions; it lies 120 miles N. E. of Nineveh.

<sup>2</sup> A name of Nisibis.

<sup>3</sup> The text has *مَلَائِكَة*, but read *مَلَائِكَة*.

She made him afraid of this world and made him love  
that which is to come.

And while he passed the night in her house and was  
sleeping in sweet sleep,

She was hovering about him in prayer and suppli-  
cation.

For our mother Hānâh-Îshô', the woman adorned [with  
virtue], used to say,

<sup>110</sup> "For a space of thirteen years that was a matter to  
me for special prayer."

Until the time wherein he received the garb of the  
ascetic life,

And on his behalf were her prayer and entreaty to God.

Now when he had learned the Psalms, and all the  
hymns, and the occasions,

And he had been taught and was well able to read  
and write,

<sup>115</sup> She took him to the great school,<sup>1</sup> the mother of the  
learned men

Who are all appointed throughout the east, and who  
water the world with their learning.

And he was taught and trained in the Scriptures and  
in their interpretations,

[Page 118] And he passed all who were in front of  
him, and those who were behind him went in  
[after him] . . . . .<sup>2</sup>

His mind was marvellous, and the aim of his actions  
was straight, |

<sup>120</sup> He was gentle and simple in his heart, and wise and <sup>Fol. 5 a</sup> enlightened in his understanding.

<sup>1</sup> Probably the great college of the Monastery of Mount Ízlâ.

<sup>2</sup> The text has "went in fully".

Remote from him was the exaltation which clingeth  
Unto men of keen motions of the mind, and disturb-  
eth their thoughts.

Little by little he advanced and attained the age of  
perfect manhood,

And he was remote from pleasure, and from converse  
with the worthless.

125 Besides the service of the refectory and all the needs  
thereof,

The monks had nothing [to do] except to receive  
strangers,

And to relieve the wayfarers, good and bad alike.

And when they were free from these things they were  
constant in the service

Of the Psalms in the temple and in the monastery,  
and in vigil by nights,

130 And in watchfulness of the times [of prayer], and in  
prostrations on the earth,

Fasting at eventide daily, incessant prayer every hour,  
Meditation on the Holy Scriptures, the purification of  
the thoughts of the soul,

And heart[s] which burned for each other with love  
and holiness.

Now our father lived as a coenobite for three years,  
as it was meet and right for him to do,

135 And then he went forth to a cell with the blessings  
and prayers of his fathers. |

Fol. 5 b He dwelt alone in a cell, even as Mâr Abraham<sup>1</sup> had  
commanded him,

<sup>1</sup> Probably Abraham, the head of the College of Nisibis, who succeeded his uncle Narses about A. D. 508.

But as for his labour and service, who saw [them]  
and who can describe [them]?

His cell was very far away from the church and the  
congregation,

And the place of the righteous man was contemptible,  
and barren of every kind of food.

140 He was not fettered by buildings, nor by bodily gra-  
tifications,

He was not held fast by constructions, and he neither  
pulled down nor built up,

He collected neither furniture nor books to put in his  
cell,

[Page 119] And he shewed forth no care in the pre-  
paration of dainty meats,

And wines for drinking and such like things never  
appeared in his cell.

145 From one week to another he received his food from  
the common [table],

And each week he took from the library one book.

He was constant in silence and quiet contemplation  
and enquiry concerning the books of the Spirit.

No man ever saw him outside his cell, except on the  
day of the congregation,<sup>1</sup>

He possessed neither acquaintance nor friend, nor a  
companion who shared his cell.

150 For he lived the life of a solitary monk, and bowed  
his head over the earth,

And only fastened his gaze on the path before his eyes.

Now | the holy man Mâr Abraham was in the habit <sup>fol. 6 a</sup>  
Of going past the cells of the novices each night,

<sup>1</sup> I. e., Sunday.

And of going in love to the brethren, and shewing them in the Lord,

155 How they were to do battle with Satan the Adversary in the contemplative life,

That they might not at the last be weak before the wiles of the crafty one,

For he feared lest any man should turn his back in the fight and should perish.

And when he saw our blessed and excellent man Rabban Bar-'Idtâ,

That he was more versed and learned than the rest in the Holy Scriptures,

160 He required of him perforce to repeat every week one book,

That is to say, from one Sunday to another he was to repeat one book,

Because it was very easy to him to repeat whole books of the pious

Mâr Theodore the Great,<sup>1</sup> the expositor of the Books of the Spirit.

This was the habit of our father, the holy man Mâr Abraham.

165 And he used to persuade us daily, whilst smiling in his humility,

That work should be heavy upon men, that they should think thereon with all their might,

And should not in the time of youth ponder on empty words and vanity.

Fol. 6 b [Page 120] Our father | Mâr Bar-'Idtâ, the holy man, used to say

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, Theodore of Mopsuestia, commonly called the "Expositor"; he died A. D. 429.

That Mâr Abraham laid upon him the repetition of the entire Scriptures,

170 And therefore, "in certain years, of the Old and New Testaments

"I repeated each and every word, in sections like the Psalms.

"And the sweetness of the repetition of the Books of the Holy Spirit,

"By reason of the sweetness of the joy thereof, I am unable to utter.

"As concerning the books of the Fathers, which are read from end to end by the old men,

175 "Abbâ Isaiah,<sup>1</sup> and Mark,<sup>2</sup> and the blessed man Mâr Evagrius,<sup>3</sup>

"All these I worked at in my mind, and I toiled at the repetition of them by heart,

"Until at length I did not once substitute the word *ger* for *den* throughout.

"I could repeat the book of the holy man Mâr Gregory of Ânzeyânzô,<sup>4</sup>

"And the Book of Histories,<sup>5</sup> and the discourses (*or, sayings*) of the Fathers one to another.

180 "I could also repeat the composition of the blessed man Basil,<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Probably Isaiah, the famous ascetic of Scete.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, Mark the Monk who flourished towards the end of the IVth century at Scete.

<sup>3</sup> *I. e.*, Evagrius of Pontus who died about A. D. 398 at Scete.

<sup>4</sup> *I. e.*, Gregory Nazienzenus, born A. D. 320, died A. D. 390.

<sup>5</sup> Probably the "Paradise" of Palladius, and the "Sayings of the Fathers".

<sup>6</sup> Basil the Great, of Caesarea, born A. D. 329, died A. D. 379.

“And I could repeat all the epistles that [were written]  
to the holy monks,

“And the Book of Mâr Nestorius which is called  
Heraklîdôs,<sup>1</sup>

“Which, in my days, had but recently gone forth  
Fol. 7 a from | Greek into Syriac.

“I laboured at this book for years, and I was always  
repeating

185 “By heart some of the sections thereof wherein was  
[spiritual] merchandize.

“During all the years which I remained with Rabban  
he never let me cease

“From the repetition of books ; and inasmuch as I  
was obedient to his loving command,

“And because I offered up my soul into his hands,  
I entered into the life which is in God,

“I never let drop one of his words, and I never treated  
lightly one of his commands.

190 “Whensoever he came to me, and whensoever I went  
to him,

“He would take my ear, and pinch it, and say to me  
smiling :—

“Hast thou filled the Euphratean air with the words  
of the repetition of the Scriptures ?

“[Page 121] ‘Hast thou filled the Euphratean air with  
the words of the Books of the Spirit ?

“And at the beginning I used to think that with some-  
what of contumely

195 “He reproached me in mockery about the river Eu-  
phrates which is set in our country.

<sup>1</sup> See Assemâni, *B. O.*, III. 1, 36.

“And I said unto him with a smile, ‘O Rabban, I will not renounce

“The naming of our river, the Euphrates, nor that of our village Rûşâpâ.

“Now he was likening me to the full-flowing river | Euphrates,

Fol. 7 b

“And was calling me by its name in a laughing manner in gladness and in love.

200 “And the holy man Mâr Abraham said unto me laughingly,

“It is not that Euphrates of which thou thinkest, O son of Christian growth,

“But the spiritual Euphrates by the streams of which is now planted

“The Holy Church, after which her son Bar-‘Idtâ hath been called.”<sup>1</sup>

These things from the mouth of our father did the holy man Bar-‘Idtâ,

205 The good and blessed man, hear, as it were blessing his disciple.

Now our father continued in such works as these for many years,

And because the monastery was in sore straits, and was lacking in everything needed by the body,

Except only the daily bread, which was given unto the community

From Sunday to Sunday, that is to say, grain for the whole week,

<sup>1</sup> There is a play of words here on the word ܒܪ-ܥܕܬܐ, and the name ܒܪ-ܥܕܬܐ.

210 Those holy men were constrained to go forth in the fields to work,

And to collect whatsoever was needed to supply their necessities.

Now, by reason of this, our father, Rabban Bar-'Idtâ,

Who could write books beautifully, accurately, and learnedly, [made copies of books].<sup>1</sup>

For there were very few who were able to write as our father could write,

215 And also | his sister bore the burden of his apparel,  
Fol. 8 a and he was not obliged to go forth.

Therefore his intimate friends used to laugh with him, saying,

"Thou art like a lamb which sucketh milk from two ewes in Christ."

Now he was trained and exercised in his keenness of perception and knowledge

More than all his brethren, because he had been directed by his master.

220 And for this reason his master, the holy man Mâr Abraham, commanded him

To read the Holy Scriptures on the nights of the First Day of the Week.

He possessed a sweet, soft voice, in which were found pleasant intonations,

His manner of expression was vigorous, and his manner of turning it in his mouth was subtle.

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, he made copies of books and sold them, and with the money he bought food; and as his sister supplied him with clothes he needed nothing else.

Also, on the day when he was reading the brethren  
collected their thoughts

225 And quieted their minds for the hearing of his sweet  
pronunciation,

For his word would drive away sleep from the eyes  
of the brethren.

To this man, who from the day[s] of his childhood  
was the heir of words of the Spirit,

Jeremiah, many generations ago, ascribed blessing,  
And said unto the Lord, | his Creator, in his pro- Fol. 8 b phecy thus :—

230 “Blessed is the man who shall bear Thy yoke, O Lord,  
in his youth,

“And shall dwell alone in contemplation, and have  
rest from the passions of time.”<sup>1</sup>

His rearing by his guide was like unto that of Jacob  
the patriarch,

Of whom Moses the Great wrote, “He was upright  
and just before his God.”

And [he was] like the glorious virgin, Joshua, the  
son of Nun, the mighty man,

235 Who during all his days departed not from the  
tabernacle of the Lord of hosts ;

And like Samuel, who ministered all the days of his  
youth

Chastely, and continently before Eli the high priest.

And as the Holy Spirit set blessings in the mouth of  
Noah, the chosen one,

Which were sown by the just man Noah in Shem,  
and from the seed of Shem He chose Abraham,

<sup>1</sup> Lamentations III. 27, 28.

240 And of all the sons of Abraham the blessed Isaac  
was set apart,

And from Isaac He raised up Jacob, and from Israel  
Judah,

[Page 123] And of all the sons of Judah the Lord  
chose David His servant, |

Fol. 9 a And, because of the purity of his heart, made him  
to rule over Mount Zion, which He loved,  
Even so did the Spirit of the Lord choose this father  
of ascetics,

245 The holy man Mâr Abraham, the chief of the monks  
of the East.

And the Lord of Abraham, the prince of believers,  
commanded him, and said unto him,

“Get thee into the land of promise that in thee all  
nations may be blessed.”<sup>1</sup>

This latter Abraham, the chief of the holy men of  
the East,

Did the Divine Nod call, and say unto him with a  
command,

250 “O Abraham, Abraham, flee from men, and thou  
shalt live ;”

And he obeyed, and went forth from his country,  
like Abraham his father.

And he went about in deserts and wildernesses, and  
in the Mount of Olives, and Mount Sinai,

And he went down to the city of Egypt, and dwelt  
in the desert of Scete.

And suddenly he sprang up in the high mountain  
which was about the city of Nisibis,

<sup>1</sup> Genesis XII. 1—3.

255 Like David, the son of Jesse, in Mount Zion, whom the Lord had chosen,  
 A likeness which was comparable to the archetype, the first Abraham,  
 [To whom] the Lord said, | “In thy seed shall all the <sup>Fol. 9 b</sup> peoples of the earth be blessed.”  
 And to this latter Abraham the Lord said, “From thy seed  
 “Will I fill all the East with priests, and men of religion, and ascetics.”

260 And when the Monastery of the holy man Mâr Abraham was filled  
 With perfect and strenuous men, and mighty men of renown,  
 Sons of the life and deeds of angels, who emulated the pattern of spiritual beings,  
 Who appeared like the stars of heaven among that congregation which was full of grace,  
 Even as Jacob, the chief of the Tribes, said to his sons in a revelation,  
 265 “Gather ye yourselves together, and I will shew you what shall happen unto you in the last times;”<sup>1</sup>  
 Even so unto this holy man Mâr Abraham was it done.  
 [Page 124] For his Master shewed him where his sons should be sent, one after the other,  
 And how he should build the monastery, and how he should end his life  
 (Now this was shewn unto Rabban in a Divine revelation).

<sup>1</sup> Genesis XLIX. 1.

270 And how was fulfilled the promise of our Lord to  
Pachomius,<sup>1</sup> [saying],  
“I will never forsake thy spiritual seed on earth.”

### SECTION I.

Fol. 10 a Now on the day of the congregation, on the holy  
First Day of the week,  
Mâr Abraham the Great selected the commemoration  
of the chosen Apostles [for reading],  
Without informing any one of his company of sons  
what was in his heart;

275 And at the time of the Holy Mysteries, before they  
were distributed to the people,  
Our father stood up before the gate of the apse, and  
cried with his voice, and said,  
“By the apostolic choice the Holy Spirit set apart  
preachers;  
“For it is written that the Spirit said thus:—‘Set  
apart for Me Saul and Barnabas  
“For the work unto which I have called them from  
the beginning.’<sup>2</sup>

280 “In like manner with us, who are sluggish and erring,  
“Doth the Holy Spirit work in respect of many men  
among you.  
“See ye that ye strive not, lest ye appear to be resist-  
ing the Spirit,  
“And ye make God angry with you, and He cast  
you away from before His face.

<sup>1</sup> He was born in Upper Egypt, A. D. 292, and died A. D. 351.

<sup>2</sup> Acts XIII. 2.

"Now, I am your father, and this have I learned in the Lord."

285 And as they were all still and wondering, and no man spake through fear,

He called our father, the excellent Rabbâ Bar-‘Idtâ, |

And the holy man George,<sup>1</sup> and the old man Mâr Fol. 10 b John,

And when they had all drawn nigh to Rabban, he took a *hēnānā*,<sup>2</sup> and signed their heads,

And blessed them, and said unto them, "May the Lord of hosts magnify you ;

290 "[Page 125] May the Lord Most High make you glorious, and give you triumph in your works ;

"And may His Name be glorified through you, O my beloved !

"O my friends, take heed that ye acquire neither gold, nor silver,

"Nor lands, nor homesteads, nor fields, nor vineyards,

"But let your own strenuous hands be sufficient to feed you,

295 "And let not them be opened wide to receive, and closed tight against giving,

"Open ye your gates for the entrance of rich and poor [alike],

"And give ye alms regularly to both orphans and widows.

"Sanctify your hands to the Lord, and gird up your loins with truth,

<sup>1</sup> See Gismondi, *De Patriarchis Nestorianorum Commentaria*, part II. p. 28 (Rome, 1897).

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 73.

“And light your lamps with the oil of love and compassion.

300 “Teach and make [men] learn diligently, and toil and be spent strenuously,

“Let your faces drop sweat in the cultivation of the vineyard of your Lord.

Fol. 11 a Keep ye | the watch of your Redeemer, until such time as He cometh to make you live again.

“And light your lamps, my children, for it is the time of the reconciliation of the Lord,

“And teach ye those who shall become your disciples even as I have taught you,

305 “And pray ye unto the Lord for them, and make supplication on their behalf.

“And keep ye your souls in piety, and your bodies in holiness,

“Keep vigil every night for their sake unto God,

“After the manner of men who have committed their thoughts unto the Lord of all.

“Guard yourselves carefully against boys, and receive them not into your habitations.

310 “Receive ye not any man until his mind be well known unto you.

“Love ye each other in concord even as Christ hath loved you.

“And any man, who these three bright lights of the Holy Church—

“Mâr Diodorus,<sup>1</sup> the chosen one, and Theodore, and Nestorius—

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<sup>1</sup> Presbyter of Antioch, and Bishop of Tarsus, who flourished about A. D. 380.

“Will not accept as teachers, and will not confess them in truth,

315 [Page 126] “Shall not in any wise mingle with you, and shall be rejected by your assembly.

“And the blessed monasteries which ye shall build | ye shall name after the Apostles,

Fol. 11 b

“For they suffered death for the Church awaiting the return of the Lord.

“O my sons, command ye your sons to consecrate their cells

“In the names of the Apostles and by their prayers, for they are the foundations of the Church.

320 “Your sons shall first of all serve in the monastery for three years,

“And then they shall deserve the freedom which is in Christ, the Lord of the worlds.

“For the reading between the Psalms of the Sundays and days of assembly,

“Let the expositions of the teacher of the world, Mâr Theodore, be read.

“And before the Atoning Mysteries, and over the table where food is eaten,

325 “Let the holy Books of the Fathers [who were] ascetics be read,

“And the introits of the glorious festivals, and the discourse on the Divine dispensation

“Of Mâr Ephraim,<sup>1</sup> the teacher of the truth, and [the works] of Mâr Narses,<sup>2</sup> the tongue of the East.”

<sup>1</sup> He died about A. D. 373; for his works see Duval, *Littérature syriaque*, p. 75 ff.

<sup>2</sup> He died about A. D. 507; for his works see Duval, *op. cit.*, pp. 346, 347.

Now when these things had been said, after the receiving of the Mysteries,

He set these three men at the head of the holy brethren.

330 First was Rabban Bar-'Idtâ, and after him Rabban George,

Fol. 12 a And after him the old man | John ; three great lights.  
And Rabban himself blessed them, and commanded each to pass in peace,

And he laid upon them the hand of blessing, and prayed over them in love ;

And thus he did unto all his disciples whom he sent out into divers places.

335 In the night they had prayer, and they were set apart [to receive] the Mysteries.

And after the church was dismissed, and the brethren had gone into their cells,

The old man took the three of them, and led them up to his cell.

He set apart the old man John for the great and mighty desert

Along the Tigris of the 'Edhnâyê,' opposite Âthôr, which is well known.

340 [Page 127] The excellent Abbâ George he sent with gladness to Margâ

On the borders of the city of Nineveh, and of the prosperous Bêth Nûhadhrâ.<sup>2</sup>

And for this our Rabbâ, Mâr Bar-'Idtâ, the holy man,

<sup>1</sup> I. e., that section of the Tigris which extends for about sixty miles to the north of Mâwsel, and about ten or fifteen south of it.

<sup>2</sup> Margâ and Bêth Nûhadhrâ lay to the north-east of Nineveh.

He set apart this place which is in Margâ and is nigh unto Nineveh.

On the morning of the morrow each of the three was ready

345 To perform that which the holy man Mâr Abraham had commanded him.

There went forth with them the *rabbê* and old men | of the congregation, and accompanied them,

Fol. 12 b

And then the old man blessed them, and he and his sons returned to the monastery.

And each of the three set his steps and went down the path which led directly to his place,

And each of them was accompanied by every one who was bound to him in love.

350 When Abbâ John went down he was alone, and no man was with him,

But afterwards there came to him Éliyâ and Henân-Îshô'.

Unto Rabban George there came three brethren

Of those who clave unto him, friends and intimate companions.

How many were the visions and revelations which the holy men had

355 Before the coming of Rabban Bar-'Idtâ to the country of Margâ !

Rabban Bar-'Idtâ went forth from the monastery wherein he had been taught,

And there were with him nine blessed brethren, good and chosen men.

Bar-Hadh-bé-Shabbâ, and Daniel, and Yâphâ, and Simon, and David, and Zachariah,

And Micah, and Elijah, and Mëbhârakh, wonderful and holy men.

360 Mēbhârakh was a young man about twenty- | two  
 Fol. 13 a years old,  
 And was from the country of Mâr Bar-'Idtâ, from  
 'Anâth, a city on the river Euphrates.  
 When Rabban and his disciples had gone down and  
 had reached the borders of Nisibis,  
 He sent the blessed man Mēbhârakh after his holy  
 sister  
 Hânâh-Îshô', who had reared him, that he might see  
 her before he went to his country,  
 365 [Page 128] Lest she should hear of his departure, and  
 choke herself with sorrow.  
 And behold, when he saw that she was coming to  
 him, and she had drawn nigh, he stood before  
 her,  
 And suddenly he bowed down to the ground before  
 her, and accorded unto her the honour which  
 was her due.  
 And he revealed to her the cause [of his departure].  
 And the two began to weep,  
 And the blessed old woman entreated him to take  
 her with him, but he refused,  
 370 Saying unto her, "Nay, mother, nay, O gracious  
     mother."  
 Now he had always honoured his sister by this ap-  
     pellation of "mother",  
 Even before he became a perfect vessel which was  
     fit for his Lord's will,  
 And instead of an imperfect man became an angel  
     of light.  
 "It is not seemly, O my mother, and not good among  
     men of discernment, |"

375 "That women should travel on the road with men ; *Fol. 13 b*  
 it would be a disgrace.

"Now since we have no certain place as yet in the  
 country,

"And we know not what may happen unto us on our  
 journey in the Lord,

"Remain thou here in peace, O blessed woman Hânhâh-  
 Îshô'.

"And be not thou distressed with trouble and sorrow  
 for thy brother's sake,

380 "But multiply thy prayers for us—for this day we  
 are old men—

"That our Lord may make straight our goings in the  
 paths of His loving will.

"And when, through Christ our Lord, and the prayer  
 of Abraham,

"And the prayers of the brethren and thyself we  
 arrive at our place in peace,

"I will send Mëbhârakh after thee, and he shall bring  
 thee unto us.

385 "And, if the Lord willeth, O my sister, do thou what-  
 soever appeareth [best] for thine old age."

And having thus quieted the desire of his sister, they  
 went onwards,

And the Divine Grace accompanied them on their way.

And at that time, the holy man and ascetic, who was  
 worthy of all blessings,

Mâr Îshô'-Zékhâ, was the head of the Monastery of  
 Shô'ê,<sup>1</sup> in the country of the Arabs.

<sup>1</sup> This monastery was situated on the west bank of the Tigris,  
 probably on the road between Nisibis and Mâwsel, or Nisibis and  
 Balâdh.

390 [Page 129] And | because they heard that he had raised  
 Fol. 14 a to life a man who had been slain four days,  
 And his fame had been carried everywhere, they  
 desired greatly to pass by him.  
 And the blessed man Mēbhârakh said, "Whilst we  
 were on our journey  
 "Suddenly there fell upon us a company of thieves  
 who were wicked men,  
 "And when we had come up with them in [the  
 strength of] our Lord, and they had seen our  
 old man,  
 395 "They stood still, and [then] came and did homage  
 before him, and besought him to pray for  
 them.  
 "And having gone onwards a little farther, behold,  
 Mâr Ishô'-Zêkhâ, the chosen one,  
 "Came out to meet us and to salute us, holding his  
 staff in his hand.  
 "And with a smile he bowed down in peace before  
 the feet of our pious father,  
 "And our Rabban also bowed down in homage be-  
 fore him, and was blessed by him.  
 400 "And he said, 'O my masters and brethren, I was  
 standing with you at the hour,  
 "'When ye came to the thieves, who were made to  
 be quiet through your prayers.'  
 "Then he took us and led us into his monastery, and  
 made us all to rest our fill,  
 "And he marvelled at the wisdom of our father Bar-  
 'Idtâ, and praised him before us.  
 "And when we went forth [next] morning Mâr Ishô'-  
 Zêkhâ went forth with us,

405 "And he prophesied to <sup>1</sup> our old man everything which *Fol. 14 b* was to come to pass in his days.

## SECTION II.

"And Mâr Joseph, of the Monastery of Tabhyâ,<sup>1</sup> saw by the spirit, and revealed unto our father, "[Saying], 'Wheresoever thou art there shall be no disturbance, and thou shalt dwell without fear.'"

And having crossed the river Tigris, and all the country of Bêth Nûhadhrâ,<sup>2</sup>

They arrived at the great school of Bêth Rastak, a village of Margâ,

410 And they passed the night [there] and departed early in the morning to the glorious Monastery of Rîshâ;<sup>3</sup>

And they went in, and were blessed by the Abbot, Stephen,<sup>4</sup> the prince of perfect men,

And he informed them of what the angel of the Lord, their Governor, had informed him,

[Page 130] [Saying], "By your hand a monastery shall be established in the quiet plain of Margâ,

"The place of a holy monastery; behold, it is between Nineveh and Margâ.

415 "Bêth Helâpê and Bêth Hakhrânyâ are two blessed villages,

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, the Monastery of the Gazelle.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, the country between Balâdh on the south and Halmôn on the north.

<sup>3</sup> This monastery was also in Margâ, but its exact position is unknown.

<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the Stephen mentioned by Thomas of Margâ (see *Book of Governors*, vol. II. p. 43).

“And to the south of them [lieth] the beautiful, peaceful, and well watered plain :

“This is the place which our Lord hath set apart for you that ye may build therein a great monastery.

Fol. 15 a “And when ye are therein there will come | unto you a company of the prophets,

“And they will encourage you in the Lord, because it hath long ago been revealed unto them concerning you.

420 “With them is everything which is useful for your satisfaction and encouragement,

“And ye and they shall set apart a place for the altar and one for the community.

“And thou, O brother Bar-IDTÂ, art about to become the head of the monastery,

“And thy sons shall be as numerous as the stars, and thy seed as the sand of the sea.

“Now know this thing also : Thy holy and chaste sister,

425 “Hânâh-Îshô‘, by God’s grace, since He hath multiplied her gifts unto her,

“At the beginning of the Fast of the Apostles shall go with her companions

“To Jerusalem, the city of the Sanctuary, by the help of the Lord God,

“And at the beginning of the latter Teshrîn<sup>1</sup> she shall come down to thee in peace,

“And near thee she shall build a house of sisters, and therein shall she be laid to rest.

430 “And as ye have been close together in the body in this world,

<sup>1</sup> I. e., November.

“So hath Christ allotted to you both nearness together in heaven.

“Rise up in our Lord, and travel ye on your way, and with you shall be the captain of the hosts “Of the Lord in the form of a driver of horses of fire and spirit.” |

And Mâr Stephen comforted us and made us glad *Fol. 15 b* with all these [words],

435 And we were filled with gladness and praise because we had seen a prophet in our days.

And he and we stood up, and he commanded prayer, and concluded it with blessings upon us all, And he kissed each one of us upon his head with fervent love.

Then the head of the monastery answered and said unto us, “Ye will pass by the village of Kôp,<sup>1</sup> “And there shall come out unto you a man who hath a son that is vexed by devils ;

440 “Pray ye that his son may be healed, and the [son’s] father shall give you a gift.

“Now the name of the man is Zanzâparôkh ;”<sup>2</sup> and his word came to pass indeed.

And we arrived at the place which had been made known at daybreak on the Friday

Of the third week after the Resurrection of my Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.

In the morning of that day we rose up and went about hither and hither on the plain,

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, Kôp near Akrà.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, Zâdhân-parrûh, زادان پرخ ; see Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser*, p. 356, note 1. See below, line 643.

445 That we might spy out a suitable place whereon we could begin to build the monastery.

And on the morning of Saturday the company of prophets came,

And with them were such things as were necessary for our own comfort and for the building.

And the angel of the Lord had shewn unto the mar-  
Fol. 16 a vellous man | Mâr Joseph

That which was written in the heights concerning our coming hither,

450 And with him was Rabban Gabh-Îshô', his disciple, who had been reared with him,

And eight other brethren, who were sons of his beautiful Monastery of Tabhyâ.

Now the Monastery of Tabhyâ is on the king's highway which passeth over the bridge

That leadeth over to the city of Hêdhayabh,<sup>1</sup> and Bêth Garmai,<sup>2</sup> and the mountain.

And they brought with them two camels laden with bread and wheat,

455 And things of divers kinds of which we had need.

And they began praying in the East, and we also prayed in the West,

And we all drew nigh each to the other, being in number about twenty.

And each saluted the other in love and in unutterable gladness,

And our happiness was such that we imagined we were in the world which is to come.

<sup>1</sup> I. e., Adiabene. The river to be crossed was the Great Zâbh.

<sup>2</sup> Bêth Garmai lay to the east of the Little Zâbh.

460 Now the old man Mâr Joseph appeared to be a phantom

By reason of his very great age: he was more than one hundred and thirty years old.

[Page 132] And he said unto our Rabban, "Rise up, let us measure the place for the temple, "Even according as it appeared unto us through the Spirit Who revealeth hidden things unto those who love Him."

And we all rose up diligently, and the old man Mâr Joseph was with us, |

465 And we took a measuring cord,<sup>1</sup> which the sons of Fol. 16 b truth had brought with them,

And the holy man Mâr Joseph took one end of the cord,

And Bar-'Idtâ the other, and they measured out the temple and the altar.

And they set the altar which they had brought with them inside the [place of the] altar which they had marked out by pegs,

After this we sat down together, we and they, and held converse.

470 And Mâr Joseph began to relate one vision after another,

And the revelations which had appeared unto him and his brethren, in truth,

Concerning the coming of our father, and the fixing of a place for the monastery,

And the great number of the monks, and the delights, and the troubles.

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, a cord divided into a number of equal parts by knots.

And when eventide had come, according to custom,  
at the ninth hour

475 We recited the Psalms of David, and celebrated the  
Holy Mysteries,

And with gladness we rejoiced in the Eucharist of  
our Lord ;

Fol. 17 a And we performed the services of | compline, and of  
the night, and of the morning according to the  
use of our monastery.

And at the third hour we celebrated the Mysteries  
according to [our] use,

And then we rejoiced in the food of the spirit, and  
in the food of the body.

480 And the blessed Mâr Joseph rose up in his great old age  
And dug up three spadefuls [of earth] as a blessing  
in [the place of] the foundations of the temple.

And he encouraged Rabban, and said unto him,  
“Brother, have no care whatsoever :

“As long as we have anything it is thine ; do val-  
iantly in the might of the Lord.

“And moreover, thou art [ordained] to arrive at the  
happy goal of God,

485 “And good sons shall increase for thee in all the  
land of the East.”

[Page 133] And he took Abbâ Gëbhâ-Îshô', and one  
camel, and they departed,

And returned to their monastery, and the other camel  
which they had brought they left for us.

And he commanded his eight disciples to remain with  
us and to build with us,

As long as we had need of them ; and they were  
rejoicing with great joy.

490 And the Rabbâ of God, Mâr Joseph, the beautiful old man,  
 Went into the village of Barzâkhê, and into the blessed Bêth Mârûth,  
 And commanded certain of the villagers to come to our help—  
 Without <sup>1</sup> our asking for them—as being something Fol. 17 b which the Lord wished.  
 Now, behold, on the morning of the second day men were gathered together and came,  
 495 And we were wondering at them, and whether they had come to make us cease [work].  
 But when they had come to us, they informed us, [saying], “Rabban Mâr Joseph sent us “To build the blessed monastery of the honourable Rabban Bar-‘Idtâ.”  
 They brought with them iron, and whatsoever was used in building,  
 And they began the work with us; and we rejoiced and glorified God.  
 500 Then the strenuous Mëbhârakh drew nigh unto our lord, saying,  
 “My father, whence can we obtain bread for all these [men]?”  
 Our old man saith unto him, “Gather ye together roots and pieces of wood,  
 “And bake cakes, O my beloved, before the meal-time cometh.”  
 Now those blessed believers heard Mëbhârakh saying these [words]  
 505 To the venerable Rabban Bar-‘Idtâ, and they answered, saying,

“Nay, Abbâ, ye shall not labour [thus], for, behold, bread is coming after us.

“Because Rabban warned us that ye had no building ready for the baking of bread.”

Fol. 18 a And when we all had been making bricks | and mud for two days

Our Abbâ dismissed the disciples of Rabban Joseph,

510 And he said unto them, “Depart in peace, O ye children, unto your own place.

“[Page 134] Henceforth the young believers shall undertake the burden of the building,

“It is neither right before God, nor seemly before men,

“That ye, O excellent sons, should be yoked to the labour of mud.”

And the believing folk round about us heard, the sons of Bêth Bar-Shîrâ, and of Bâbhëthâ,

515 And of Bêth Hûrnâyâ, and of Bêth Hîlâpê, and of the villages near Nineveh,

And many crowds of well known believers made ready, And came to help us either with money for the expenses or with labour.

Thus by the grace of Christ, and by the support of the believers,

In that first summer we began and finished the building,

520 In the year eight hundred and seventy-three,<sup>1</sup> according to the reckoning of the Greeks.

When Khosrau<sup>2</sup> (Chosroës) the First, (the grandfather of king Khosrau,

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, A. D. 562.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, Khusrau I. Anoshârwân, who began to reign on July 12, A. D. 531, and whose reign ended in February A. D. 579.

That is to say, Khosrau,<sup>1</sup> the son of Hôrmîzd,<sup>2</sup> the last king of the Persians), was king,  
And when Mâr Ezekiel<sup>3</sup> was the Patriarch of the East,  
And when Mâr H  n  n   was the spiritual head | and <sup>Fol. 18 b</sup> Metropolitan

<sup>525</sup> Bishop of Arb  l,<sup>4</sup> that is to say, the city of H  dhayabh (Adiabene),

On the holy First Day of the week, on the twentieth day of N  s  n,<sup>5</sup>

The holy man Mâr Bar-  Idt   laid the foundations of his monastery,

And the believing men our neighbours became our diligent helpers,

And we began it and finished it in the summer, which is already written above in our discourse.

<sup>530</sup> We built the temple, and the monastery buildings, and cells ten in number,

For we were brethren ten in number at the beginning in this place.

For Rabban Bar-  Idt   we built a cell even as Mâr Joseph

Commanded, below the temple, upon a rock above the fountain,

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, Khusrau II. Parw  z, who began to reign A. D. 590 (see N  ldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber*, p. 435), and reigned for one year.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, Hôrmîzd IV. who began to reign on June 30, A. D. 578, and reigned until A. D. 590.

<sup>3</sup> He sat from A. D. 567 to A. D. 580; see Assem  n  , *B. O.* III. 1, pp. 435, 615; the Persian king who was reigning in the year of the Greeks 873 (A. D. 562), was Hôrmîzd IV. and not Khusrau I.

<sup>4</sup> Arbil, or Arbela, was the *capital* of Adiabene, and was also called Hazza.

<sup>5</sup> *I. e.*, April.

For the angel of the Lord, in the form of the old man Joseph, appeared

535 Unto Mâr Hananyâ, the head of the Monastery of Geshrâ, which is on the Great Zâbh.

[Page 135] And Rabban Bar-'Idtâ dwelt in the rest and peace of his service,

And Bar Ḥadh-bĕshabbâ, and Daniel; may their memory be for blessing!

As for the rest of us we took up the affairs of the community,

Fol. 19 a The service | of the temple and of the monastery, before the brethren who came as disciples increased,

540 And we remained without possessions, except only the one camel

Which the holy man Mâr Joseph of the Monastery of Tabhyâ had given unto us.

She carried the wood, and ground the corn for the brethren,

And she by herself performed all the bringing in of things for the community.

### SECTION III.

One day the disciple of Rabban, that is to say, Mĕbhârakh, laughingly

545 Answered and said, "Abbâ, we have need of another camel

"Which shall be a companion and associate of this camel which we have here now;"

And this was said by the blessed man as if in prophecy.

And, smiling at him, our father said unto him, "My beloved Mēbhârakh,  
 "If Christ knoweth that it will be beneficial a camel will come speedily."

550 Then the strenuous Mēbhârakh said unto him, "If a camel were to come to us  
 "We would make a mill here, and we should be able to grind [the corn] easily,  
 "And the brethren would not be fatigued by going to a distance | whenever [they needed] the mill;" Fol. 19 b  
 And the blessed old man said unto him, "The will of the Lord be [done]!"  
 On the following Sunday, behold, a certain man who was a believer came  
 555 From the blessed and well-protected village of Bêth Ghûrbhâk, which is in the country of Nineveh.  
 And he was holding a camel by the head rope, and was leading it and coming unto us.  
 And he asked us, saying, "Where is the cell of the glorious Rabban Bar-'Idtâ?"  
 And we shewed him the old man's cell, and we went in with him to the holy man.  
 [Page 136] And he bowed down on his knees to our father, and kissed him, and was blessed by him,  
 560 And he gave him greetings from the Nekhwârjân,<sup>1</sup> an upright believer, and a nobleman,  
 The lord of the [above] mentioned Bêth Ghûrbhâk, and said unto him, "The Nekhwârjân doeth homage unto your love,

<sup>1</sup> I. e., Nakhîrajân, *نخیرجان*, a title meaning "prince"; see Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser*, p. 152, note 2. See below, line 770.

“And hath sent this camel to you as a blessing, that ye may pray for him,

“And also for his camels which are sick even unto death.”

Then Rabban Bar-'Idtâ gave him a *hēnānâ*,<sup>1</sup> and prayer-oil,<sup>2</sup>

565 And said unto him, “Salute our friend, Nekhwârjân, and salute his village,

“And when thou hast come unto him in peace,

Fol. 20 a      sprinkle some of | the *hēnānâ* upon his camels,

“And God shall heal them and drive out from them the pestilence.”

Now when he had come to Bêth Ghûrbhâk, and had sprinkled some of the *hēnānâ* on the camels,

They received healing easily through the prayer of Rabban Bar-'Idtâ.

570 And little by little the name of this holy monastery became known,

And benefits began to flow forth therefrom into all regions.

#### SECTION IV.

Now when we had fulfilled one year there departed from this temporary life

To the mansions of the kingdom on high, Mâr Joseph, holy of soul,

On the first Friday after the Resurrection of our Vivifier.

<sup>1</sup> The dust of a martyr's body, or from the ground of the cell or grave of a holy man. A little was mixed with water for the purpose of making a curative drink, or with oil for anointing purposes.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, consecrated oil.

575 And Rabban went to the funeral of the holy man,  
and we with him,

And also the holy woman, Rabban's sister, the fine  
gold and beauty of chastity.

During the year she came to us with other women  
her companions,

And built a nunnery for herself above the village of  
Bâbhethâ,

By the side of the road which goeth unto the flourish-  
ing country of Margâ.

580 In her humility she built her nunnery in the name of  
the martyred woman Pambrôniyâ<sup>1</sup>

Who | testified in Nisibis in the days of Diocletian. <sup>Fol. 20 b</sup>

[Page 137] After she had lived twenty years she de-  
parted from this world unto Paradise,

Being eighty and three years old in [her] holy life.

## SECTION V.

Now in the mountain of Alpep,<sup>2</sup> in the Monastery of  
Mâr Mattai,<sup>3</sup> the holy,

585 When we came here in the beginning, our brethren  
used to dwell,

<sup>1</sup> A lady who lived in the city of Nisibis and who was martyred in the reign of Diocletian about A. D. 304. Selenus, an officer of the Emperor, wished to marry her to his nephew Lysimachus, but she refused to be married, and Selenus put her to death in a very cruel manner. The narrative of her martyrdom will be found in *Acta Sanctorum*, June 5.

<sup>2</sup> I. e., Jabal Maklûb near Mâwsel. The name Alpep is said to have been given to the mountain because of the thousands, *Alpaiyâ* (علپا), of monks who lived there. See Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Mâr Matthew was put to death in the reign of Sapor I., who began to reign A. D. 330.

Before the monastery was overthrown by means of the madman Zakkâi,

[Who was sent] by the infidel Gabriel,<sup>1</sup> the physician of the valiant Khusrâu.

Now the name of one of [these] brethren was Ishô'-Sabhrân, a blessed man,

A chaste and humble man, and one who feared the living God.

590 This man came continually to Rabban, and he, with his companions,

Two other brethren, asked him to let him leave his own monastery and to come to us.

And our Rabban prohibited them from ever doing this (*i. e.*, coming) again,

Saying, "When it is convenient I will tell you to come."

Fol. 21 a And in like manner two other brethren, who dwelt in the Monastery of Kôkhtâ,<sup>2</sup>

595 Used to come unto Rabban and entreat [him] to let them come to us.

Now we complained of our father because he did not wish them to come to us,

That the brethren might have increased, and the monastery might have been filled with them.

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, Gabriel of Sinjâr, a famous physician who was high in favour with Khusrâu II (A. D. 590—628) and with his queen Shirîn; see Bar-Hebraeus *Chron. Eccles.*, II, col. 109; Assemânî, *B. O.*, II, 404, 416; Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, p. 358; Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, pp. 118—121. By the use of the word "infidel", the writer only means that Gabriel was a Jacobite!

<sup>2</sup> This monastery is identified with the Monastery of Mâr Mattai by Bar-Hebraeus; see *Chron. Eccles.*, II. col. 67; and I. col. 285. On the name see Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, pp. 176, 177. Kôkhtâ here probably means "wind", or, طیف "pleasant wind".

But our father, in his humility, softly and pleasantly  
Used to say unto us always, "Nay, my sons, nay,  
my sons, ye must not do [this].

600 "It is neither pleasing before God, nor just to men,  
"For us to become the cause of the decay of these  
[holy] places which now [exist]."

Now the old man used to tell us that "the Monastery  
of Kôkhtâ

"Was in former times the seat of the Metropolitan  
of Hêdhayabh,<sup>1</sup>

"And the glorious Mâr John, one of the Three  
Hundred and Eighteen,<sup>2</sup>

605 "[Page 138] Built it after the name of the church of  
Kôkhê,<sup>3</sup> which was the Patriarchal throne,

"Which was built by him that was blessed in all  
things, Mâr Mârî,<sup>4</sup> the apostle of the truth,

"Who first taught the East the knowledge of One God:  
"Kôkhtâ, that is, 'daughter of cakes', of the throne  
of Mâhôzâ Rabbâ,<sup>5</sup>

"Also Selîk<sup>6</sup> of Seleucus<sup>7</sup> the king, | and Kalyâ<sup>8</sup> of Fol. 21 b  
Nimrod the Cushite.

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, Adiabene. See Assemâni, *B. O.* II. p. 99 of the *Dissertatio de Monophysitis*, under *Monast. S. Matthaei*.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, the 318 bishops who attended the Council of Nicaea A. D. 325.

<sup>3</sup> Kôkhê is the name of the very ancient city which was restored by Seleucus and called "Seleucia", and which became the seat of the Nestorian Patriarchs; the city of Ctesiphon stood close by.

<sup>4</sup> See Bar-Hebraeus, *Chron. Eccles.*, II. col. 15 ff.; Gismondi, *Maris Amri et Slibae*, II. p. 1 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *I. e.*, the "Great Fortress" = Seleucia and Ctesiphon.

<sup>6</sup> *I. e.*, Seleucia.

<sup>7</sup> *I. e.*, Seleucus Nicator, who died B. C. 281.

<sup>8</sup> *I. e.*, Kalneh, or Ctesiphon.

610 "And the Mâr John whom we have mentioned was taken from Kôkhtâ by the command of "Shâbhôr,<sup>1</sup> the Persian king, who slew him because of his testimony for Christ.

"Thus the shrine of the holy man Mâr Mattai, the fellow soldier

"Of Rabban Mâr Âwgîn<sup>2</sup> the Great, was [also] the monastery of Mâr John.

"And it is not right that we should be the means of the destruction of these [places],

615 "For behold, the time of their destruction by another draweth nigh.

"And these blessed brethren, and many like unto them,

"Will come to us afterwards by reason of the sufferings [caused by] the sorcerers."

And his word actually came to pass through the lascivious Gabriel,

Even as we will relate, if our Lord willeth, at the end of our discourse.

## SECTION VI.

620 Now a certain man of [the village of] Bâbhethâ, whose name was Ishô'-Aprî,<sup>3</sup>

A believing and God-fearing man, who did the will of his Lord,

Had a beloved son, and through the agency of Satan

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, Shâpûr II., who reigned from A. D. 309 to A. D. 379.

<sup>2</sup> A brief summary of his life will be found in my *Book of Governors*, vol. I. p. CXXV ff.

<sup>3</sup> *I. e.*, "Jesus made to blossom" (*or*, bear fruit).

His two eyes had been blinded, and his hearing had been taken away;

And his father set<sup>1</sup> him on an ass, and brought him to Rabban at the monastery, |

625 And having left him in the martyrium he went down Fol. 22 a to the old man and told him concerning him.

Then Rabban commanded him, [saying], "Stay ye here both of you this day in the martyrium,

"[Page 138] And behold, I will command the brethren to pray for him before Christ;

"To-morrow morning bring thy son unto me, and believe, and doubt not,

"For everything can come to pass for him that believeth in God."

630 So the believing man did according to the command of the holy man,

And in the night our lord visited the young man, and he was healed by his prayer.

Then [the father] brought him in to Rabban Bar-'Idtâ both seeing and hearing,

And we also rejoiced with them, and we glorified the God of the universe.

And the believing man and his brethren asked that they might make this monastery heir to certain land,

635 But Rabban did not wish [it], and said to them, "Blessed are ye by the Lord of hosts !

"My children, let the land be yours, for ye have need of the produce [thereof],

"And let it be for the benefit of such children as God hath given unto you.

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "threw him."

Fol. 22 b "And if we also now acquire | lands and fields  
 "To what end are we called ascetics and monks?  
 640 "Nay, nay, my children, ye must not do [this], and  
 we will never do it,  
 "For our Lord hath commanded us not to possess  
 either gold or silver."

## SECTION VII.

And there was also a man of the village of Kôp,<sup>1</sup>  
 Zandhaprôkh,<sup>2</sup> who belonged to our land,  
 Over him our father prayed outside, and a devil went  
 forth from his son.  
 And when this young man had grown up, and had  
 gotten understanding, and had learned how to  
 read and write,  
 645 He came and was a disciple in our monastery through  
 our Rabban.  
 Now the name of this man was Têrîs-Îshô', and he  
 was perfect in body, in soul,  
 In mind, in humility, and in the rectitude of fair deeds  
 and life.  
 [Page 140] Now the father of this Têrîs-Îshô' wished to  
 do an act of grace to us,  
 And he went, against the command of Rabban, and  
 bought us some land for our monastery,  
 650 In the middle of the plain of Margâ, a piece<sup>3</sup> five  
 miles in extent,

<sup>1</sup> I. e., Kôp near Akrâ.

<sup>2</sup> I. e., Zâdhân - parrûh زادهان پرخ; see Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser*, p. 356, note 1. See above, line 441, and below, line 809.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, "a journey."

For many thousand [pieces] of gold ; now he was exceedingly rich.

And having informed Rabban [thereof], he chid him, and said to him, "We do not need [it].

"Our Lord commanded | us that we should not love <sup>Fol. 23 a</sup> this world.

"If we were to seek this world, what should we leave?

655 "And [as for] Tērīs-Îshō' this day God is his Father."

And a second year having passed he built on the land a little market,

And it was called "Bêth Kôpiyâ", the name of the village of Zandâpârôkh.<sup>1</sup>

### SECTION VIII.

And Rabban used to say to his sons, "It is right that as concerns an ascetic

"By his appearance, and by his speech, and by his dress, and by his gravity,

660 "And by his cell, and by his actions, and by his sitting down, and by his rising up,

"It should be known by all beholders that he is leading the life of the angels."

The sons of the holiness of Rabban behaved according to his word in love ;

Those who had cells sat down and rose up by measure ;

For those among them who were monks<sup>2</sup> a little window to give light

665 He opened, facing the sun, that a man might read and perform service.

<sup>1</sup> See above, lines 441 and 642.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, monks who lived in separate cells.

He was within the door of the very small house all the day,

Fol. 23 b And at night he went forth | for his needs and his service.  
As concerning those who dwelt in graves they gave no care whatsoever,

Either to gardens, or to trees, or to beds of green herbs.

670 [Page 141] Moreover, many of them never came to the congregation,

And the monks who lived together used to carry food to them, and set it in the windows.

#### SECTION IX.

In the days of the Catholicus, Mâr Sabhr-Îshô<sup>1</sup>, the holy man,

Khusrau,<sup>2</sup> the king, the son of Hôrmizd, the king of the Persians, asked him

[Saying], “Gather together, O Catholicus, the bishops of the East,

675 “And the most strenuous of the ascetics, and the renowned teachers with them

“That they may make it clear before Khusrau how it is that the East confesseth

“The Adorable Trinity of Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit,

“One praiseworthy Substance, One Nature, One Self-existent Being,

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, Sabhr-Îshô<sup>1</sup> I., who was a native of Pêrôzâbhâd in Bêth Garmai; he was appointed Bishop of Lâshôm, and afterwards, A. D. 596, Patriarch, and he died A. D. 604, being more than 80 years old. See Assemânî, *B. O.*, II. p. 415; III. 1. 441—449; Bar-Hebraeus, *Chron. Eccles.*, II. 107; Guidi, *Un nuovo testo Siriaco*, pp. 10, 15; Gismondi, *Maris Amri et Slibae*, pt. I. p. 50; pt. II. p. 29 f. (Latin translation.)

<sup>2</sup> Khusrau II. Pârwêz reigned from A. D. 590 to 628.

“And how it is that possessing One Nature Three Persons are counted,

680 “And while Three Persons are declared One of them precedeth not the Other,

“The Father not preceding | the Son, nor the Son <sup>Fol. 24 a</sup> preceding the Holy Spirit,

“But being Three they are co-equal in self-existence and nature,

“And being One they are acknowledged Three with praise and adoration.

“And let them make clear also how it is that the orthodox Easterns confess

685 “The mystery of the Incarnation of Christ with two natures.”

And Rabban wrote to the monastery of the holy man, Mâr Abraham the Great,<sup>1</sup>

And Mâr Bâbhai<sup>2</sup> the Great came down, and other holy men with him.

And afterwards he sent others, believing and enlightened (*or, learned*) men,

And with them was a letter of the Catholicus to our father [Bar-‘Idtâ],

690 For he did not wish to go down himself to the gate of the kingdom of Khusrâu.

And there [went] our Rabban, and the chosen one Mâr Bâbhai the Great,

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, the Monastery of Abraham on Mount Izlâ, near Nisibis.

<sup>2</sup> Many particulars are given of this great man by Thomas of Margâ: see *Book of Governors*, vol. II. pp. 46, 57, 90 ff. Bâbhai was a native of Béth Zabdai, a district on the Tigris near Jazirat ibn ‘Omar, and he flourished from A. D. 569 to 628. See Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, p. 121; Assemâni, *B. O.*, III. 1. p. 88; and Guidi, *Un nuovo testo*, p. 17, at the foot.

[Page 142] And it was they who wrote down the confession of the true faith,  
Which is this day acknowledged in the divine books.

## SECTION X.

Let us now come to the writing down of the sad and sorrowful history

695 And of the painful repentance of the righteous man  
Fol. 24 b who sinned and repented.

There was a certain bishop from the countries round about us—

It is not seemly for us to make known which because it may offend the hearers—

Now, as for this bishop, Yazdapneh<sup>1</sup> was his name and title.

Because of his beautiful and good works the Enemy had envy of him,

700 And Satan cast him down through a woman, and did away his episcopacy,

For he was vanquished by his evil imagination, and became a mocking unto many.

And having remained for a short time [in sin] his soul condemned him and reproached him,

And he roused himself from his slough, and fled from the stinking thing which he served.

And he rose up by night, no man knowing it, and he came to Rabban quickly,

705 And told him about his fall, and about his shameful deeds.

<sup>1</sup> I. e., Yazdpanâh, يزد پناه; see Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, p. 87. The name occurs again in lines 718, 724.

When the old man heard he wondered greatly, and  
 he wept over him as over a dead man,  
 And he embraced him, and kissed him, and said to  
 him in great suffering,  
 "Woe to our frail nature! [See] how it hath been  
 overthrown in its fall  
 "Through the evil Calumniator, the father and lord  
 of wickedness. |

710 "Despair not, O my brother, despair not of thy life <sup>Fol. 25 a</sup>  
 which is in Christ,

"And I will be a participator with thee in thy peni-  
 tence in all that is necessary.

"Thou hast fallen like a man; rise up like a mighty  
 man in the Lord.

"Strong men fall and rise up again, but weak men  
 fall and perish.

"Take heart, O my brother, take heart, and despair  
 not in our Lord;

715 "[Page 143] Rouse thyself, lest the end come, and thou  
 depart in thy foul sin."

So Rabban took him to his breast, and commanded  
 us to build a cell

Some distance from the monastery, saying, "I have  
 need of it for myself."

And Rabban took Yazdapneh thither by night secretly,  
 And he shut the door of the cell upon him until a  
 certain time was ended.

720 And he left an opening that [the monks] might thrust  
 food through,

And through which he might see the light of the  
 sun and read the Holy Books;

And Rabban used to go to him every week once or twice,

And visit him, and he commanded us that no man should go to his cell.

Fol. 25 b Time having gone by | the matter of Yazdapneh,<sup>1</sup> the frail one, became known,

725 For he repented before God truly, and He accepted him in His grace and mercy.

This man composed certain verses on penitence for himself,

And he used to recite them to special tones with bitter tears.

And whenever any one of us wished to weep for himself in grief

He would go secretly by night to his cell and listen to him singing.

730 By day and by night he used to moan like a dove the young of which are dead,

And by reason of his moanings and groanings the mountains and plains used to weep.

Now after three years, he opened his cell, and went to live the life of an anchorite in the mountain,

And Rabban Bar-'Idtâ made known to us that our Lord had accepted his repentance.

## SECTION XI.

In a village which was situated to the east of us called Barzânê,

735 There was a certain rich man, a believer, and a nobleman, whose name was Malbêd,

And through a war [caused by] the Calumniator, he and the sons of his house were overcome,

<sup>1</sup> See above, line 698.

And they fled from their father's house, and built themselves | another one, and dwelt therein. Fol. 26 a

[Page 144] Now he had silver and gold which had been hidden by their fathers,  
But Satan would not allow them to approach near the place [where they were].

740 Everyone who sought to go there in the daytime heard terrifying sounds,  
And in the night the sounds of stones being cast down in the courtyard.

This believing man Malbêd came to our Rabbâ, and informed him, [saying]

“Behold, for many years [past] the devils have driven us from our house.”

And Rabban called to the blessed man Mëbhârakh, and said to him, “O my son,

745 “Rise up, and make thyself ready, thou, and Yaft, and Simon, and David, and Zachariah,

“And Micah, and Elijah, and [take] with you thirteen other brethren.

“And go ye and keep watch this night in the house of the believing man Malbêd.

“And Bar Ḥadh-bë-Shabbâ and Daniel shall keep watch in their cells.

“And I will be with you, in spirit and in body, in everything which ye shall do in Christ.

750 “So that by prayer and supplication before the Lord God

“The operation of devils shall be swept away from the house of these wretched folk.”

So Mëbhârakh did as he had been commanded, and the brethren entered | and prayed in the house. Fol. 26 b

And the devils were making them to hear mighty and terrible sounds,  
 And afterwards the devils made sparks of fire to appear,  
 755 And afterwards the devils were sprinkling drops of blood upon them.  
 And afterwards [came] the sound as of the falling of the house which was hidden from them,  
 And filthy phantoms, and abominable ghostly forms.  
 But they, according to the command of Rabba Bar-'Idtâ, may his prayer protect us!  
 Neither trembled, nor feared the devils, nor ceased singing their Psalms.  
 760 And before the cock crew the devils were put to shame and vanquished by them,  
 And they reviled Rabban Bar-'Idtâ, and cursed his disciples, and took to flight.  
 But the monks continued in prayer to the God of the universe until morning.  
 [Page 145] And the believing men were delivered from the devils, and all those who heard ascribed praise unto the Lord.  
 And the name Barzânê was changed by the family of Malbêd to Shâhar Sa'âr,  
 765 And he received the headship of Margâ for many years through Rabban.

## SECTION XII.

Fol. 27 a

And Rabban lived here for a period of ten years,  
 And the brethren increased in numbers, and the monastery abounded in holy ascetics.

## SECTION XIII.

Now concerning the glorious man Běrīkh-Íshó', who  
was a great friend of our father,

The son of the Nekhwârjân,<sup>1</sup> the prince, from Béth  
Ghûrbâk, the well built village—

770 By the dust which was taken from his cell in faith  
Christ used to work all manner of healings on the  
believing folk.

And every sick person who went into the temple, or  
to Rabban, used to come

Unfailingly and bow down in worship at the cell of  
Běrīkh-Íshó'.

Now, as we were standing one Sunday in vigil and  
general prayer,

775 The cross which was on the steps of the altar fell  
on the ground and was broken.

And we were afraid, and as this happened, behold,  
Rabban went out from his retreat

And came quickly to the temple, and when we saw  
him we ceased from praying.

And, shedding tears, he answered and said, “Běrīkh-  
Íshó' hath departed this life,

“And hath gone to the country of the blessed, to | his fol. 27 b holy fathers.”

780 Then we went to his cell and saw him kneeling upon  
his knees

In prayer before God, and we brought him to the  
temple in honour.

<sup>1</sup> I. e., نجیرجان; see above, lines 560, 561, and the note.

[Page 146]

## SECTION XIV.

Of another brother whose name was Mattai, from the country of Béth Garmai,<sup>1</sup>

Rabban testified, and said, "He was pre-eminent in ascetic excellence."

They say that he was sent on certain business during the summer by Rabban,

785 And that as he and his companion were going along the road, all day long,

Even during the blazing noon, he turned his face to the East, and bowed down to the ground every ten steps;

And he would bow down, and rise up again, and his tongue never ceased singing a Psalm.

Now our Lord wrought a wonderful thing through Mattai in the land of Margâ,

In a village called Béth Kësâyê, wherein was a deep well,

790 Which went down to the abyss, and a wicked devil lived therein,

And he used to appear in the form of a horse unto those who passed his way.

And the people of those villages having come they

Fol. 28 a complained | to Rabban,

And besought him to make them a deliverance from that devil.

Then he called this Mattai, and said unto him, "Go, my son, with these people,

795 "And ask Christ our Lord to deliver them from the devils."

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<sup>1</sup> A district on the left bank of the Little Zâbh.

And when they had departed a little way from the village, he took three little stones<sup>1</sup> in his hands, And he made over them the sign of the Cross; and he commanded the people, and said unto them, “When ye come to the fountain, cast in these little stones, “And the power of Christ shall drive that devil thence.”

800 And they did according to his word, and the devil never appeared [again], Through his prayers and blessings; and all who heard glorified God.

## SECTION XV.

There was another man in this blessed monastery, Who had become a convert from Magianism to our old man, and his name was Yazdâdh;<sup>2</sup>

[Page 147] And [seeing] by chance a certain woman, both of whose eyes were blind,

805 And wishing to make Yazdâdh happy,<sup>3</sup> the old man said unto him, “Lay thy right hand | upon the eyes of this poor fol. 28 b woman;”

And having done so, her eyes were opened, and the people praised and confessed God.

## SECTION XVI.

And also [concerning] the holy man Têrîş-Îshô', the son of the honourable Zadhnâprôkh<sup>4</sup> —

<sup>1</sup> *Or*, pebbles.

<sup>2</sup> A Persian name meaning the “Gift of Yazd”.

<sup>3</sup> *I. e.*, Bar-‘Idtâ wished to encourage Yazdâdh by giving him the power to work a miracle.

<sup>4</sup> See above, lines 441 and 642.

They brought to the monastery a certain soldier of the army of the kingdom of Persia,

810 And through the violence of the devils in him he was bound carefully with cords.

Now as they were bringing him into the martyrium to bind him with the chain which was there,

The coenobite Têrîş-Îshô' happened to meet the soldier.

And in the humility of the power of our Lord, he drew nigh, and took hold of the man's hands,

And straightway his devil cried out and left him, and he came to his senses,

815 And they brought the soldier to Rabban, and having learned about him he praised his Creator.

### SECTION XVII.

Now there was in the congregation of Rabbâ another monk

Who also had become his disciple, and his name was Yâwnân,<sup>1</sup> a glorious man,

Fol. 29 a This man ministered for ten | years to the comforts of strangers,

And he washed, and nursed, and attended to the sick and those afflicted with disease,

820 And the whole of the time that Dâdh-Îshô'<sup>2</sup> was in the service of the Community,

Without [saying] a word he continued in the Lord, and he did everything which he was commanded at a nod.

<sup>1</sup> *Or*, Jonah.

<sup>2</sup> A name meaning the Gift of Jesus.

And when he went out into freedom, he did not build himself a cell,  
 But he made for himself a booth of twigs at some distance away from the monastery,  
 That he might perform mighty deeds and healings by the power of Christ.

825 [Page 148] He always supplied himself with food from roots and herbs;

And he had another secret cave near the river Hazâr  
 Wherein, in winter time, he used to dwell secretly,  
 But during the whole of the summer he used to endure the suffering of the noonday heat.

Now I myself saw him once resting among the hills round about him,

830 And he was standing in a mountain hollow, and two mighty lions

Were standing before him, in wonder, and he was playing with them

Just as we play with the dogs who watch our flocks and herds.

And the gazelles, and the foxes, and all kinds of wild animals used to throng to him just as [if he had been] their fellow.

Fol. 29 b

Now in stern and hard works time passed by him here

835 For nine and twenty years until he became an angel;  
 And our Lord wrought by his hand a sign which passeth understanding and hearing.

Some distance away from him he saw thieves plundering some men,

And he took his staff, and went into the wood, and sent out a lion on them;

Thus he saved the men from the thieves, and they returned to their houses in peace.

840 And again a certain sick man whose bones were dried up by disease—

Now his sickness was a very old one, and he had been ill for many years—

In faith went to him, to that little cave in which he dwelt, And he entered and slept upon his dust, and straight-way he gained healing.

### SECTION XVIII.

Let the mouth of the reader be sweetened by the story of the glorious man Zakkâi,

845 Who was from the village of Hazzâ and who suffered in bonds for Christ's sake.

In his youth he endured torturings from the Magians for Christ,

Fol. 30 a And being worn out by tribulations | he came to the ascetic life.

[Page 149] The Lord gave him the gift of knowing all secret things

And of doing mighty deeds and wonders, and he was the boast of all.

850 Now a certain woman whose blood ran away watched him as he was going into the temple,

And she drew nigh to the hem of his garments in faith, and laid hold upon them.

And when he looked at her he wept, and she took an oath to him in Christ,

And he made the sign of the Cross on his hand, and thus she received healing.

## SECTION XIX.

And the venerable Nîsânâyâ, from the country of  
Dëbhar Hebhtôn,<sup>1</sup>

855 Was a disciple of our pious father, Rabban Bar-'Idtâ,  
the perfect man.

And during his service which he served for three  
years in working the hand mill

No man ever heard from him a word of weariness  
or of complaint.

Now when he went forth to his cell he undertook the  
labour

Of becoming gardener in the vegetable garden, and  
of carrying to the brethren their bread.

860 Now it happened that one | year there were locusts Fol. 30 b  
in our country,

And they were about to enter into the garden of the  
holy man Nîsânâyâ.

And he took his stick in his hand, and going round  
his garden in a circle,

The venerable man said unto the locusts as unto  
beings which possessed knowledge,

“In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ye shall not  
have power, O locusts,

865 “Either to enter into this garden, or to injure anything  
therein.”

And the locusts submitted to the command of Nîsânâyâ and were obedient unto him,

And they refrained from injuring him and took themselves away, and this was known unto all men.

<sup>1</sup> Probably the plain of Harîr; see Abbeloos, *Acta Mâr Kardaghi*, p. 51, l. 4; and Feige, *Die Geschichte des Mâr Abhdishô* (p. 31).

## SECTION XX.

At the time when Mâr Abhâ, the Bishop of the city  
of Nineveh, returned  
From Bêth Rômâyê<sup>1</sup> in honour, with Khusrau<sup>2</sup> (Chos-  
roës), the king of Persia,  
870 [Page 150] The Ninevites were relating unto him the  
triumphs and mighty deeds  
Of our pious, and holy, and excellent father, Rabban  
Bar-'Idtâ,  
In a particular, and proper, and praiseworthy, and  
seemly manner.

Fol. 31 a And the sons of the | blessed [village of] Bêth Ghûrbâk,  
who were men worthy of good things and blessings,  
Also [spake] to the Bishop concerning the revelations  
which he had seen.

875 And they said unto him, "When thou, O father, wast  
remote from thy children,  
"They were complaining that we did not know whether  
thou wert alive or not,  
"And the old man Rabbâ Bar-'Idtâ consoled us greatly,  
and said,  
"Beloved, be ye not distressed about your holy Bishop,  
"For he is alive and is [held] in honour in Bêth  
Rômâyê.  
880 "And it is the will of our Lord that ye shall rejoice  
yourselves in seeing his greatness [again].  
"Be ye happy, my children, in your hearts, and be-  
lieve that ye shall see him with gladness."

<sup>1</sup> I. e., the territory of the Byzantine Greeks.

<sup>2</sup> I. e., Khusrau II. Pârwêz (A. D. 590—628).

## SECTION XXI.

And when the mighty man Khusrav (Chosroës) fled  
before Behrâm,<sup>1</sup> the rebel,

We went to that holy father, and we told him of  
another trouble, [saying]

“The peaceful crown of Khusrav (Chosroës) hath fled,  
and the tyrant Behrâm hath stood on his throne.”

885 And the holy old man answered and said unto us <sup>Fol. 31 b</sup>  
with a smile,

“See ye how greatly beloved is your Bishop by our  
Lord Jesus Christ,

“For the king of the Persians goeth after him and  
bringeth him [back] in honour.”

And when we besought him to explain this, he  
answered and said unto us,

“Behold, Mâr Abhâ the Bishop is kept with Môrikê<sup>2</sup>  
(Mauricius),

890 “And Khusrav (Chosroës) hath fled to Mauricius from  
before the tyranny of Behrâm.

“And behold, he is sending with him to help [him]  
the hosts of the Rômâyê.<sup>3</sup>

“And Chosroës will return to overthrow and destroy  
Behrâm the rebel;

“[Page 151] And Chosroës will demand the Bishop from  
Mauricius,

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, Bahram, or Varanes, a famous general who served in the armies of Khusrav I. and Hôrmîzd IV.; he defeated Khusrav II. and usurped the throne of Persia, but was finally vanquished by Narses, the general of the Emperor Mauricius.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, Mauricius Flavius Tiberius, Emperor of Constantinople, from A. D. 582 to A. D. 620.

<sup>3</sup> *I. e.*, the Byzantine Greeks.

“And he will come in glory with Chosroës, and bring with him honours and gifts.

895 “And now, O our father, thou shalt return in the strength of the might of Christ.”

And Mâr Abhâ, hearing these things about this prophet of the later [time],

Marvelled much and wondered greatly, and he praised the old man before the believing folk.

And he stood up with the nobles, and prefects,<sup>1</sup> and freemen of the village of Bêth Ghûrbâk,

Fol. 32 a To whom Mâr Bar-'Idtâ | was more beloved than any other man,

900 And he stood up with joy and came to us in the week of the Holy Apostles.

And Rabban himself at that time was living the life of a recluse in his cell,

And having made known unto him concerning the arrival of Mâr Abhâ the Bishop,

And his loving friends, the sons of Bêth Ghûrbâk, he went out readily to meet them.

And thereupon the two were blessed, each by each, in the love of our Lord,

905 And Mâr Abhâ took the feet of Rabban and set them in his bosom.

And he bowed himself [over them] and kissed them, and passed his hands over his eyes,

<sup>1</sup> The **نَوَّاب** were originally the governors of districts or provinces. The Arabic form is **نَوَّاب**, plural **نَوَّابُونَ**, and **نَوَّابَة**; see the authorities quoted in my *Book of Governors*, vol. II. pp. 256, 257. Manna (*Vocabulaire*, p. 139) explains **نَوَّاب** by **رَئِيسُ الْفَلَاحِينَ وَالْقَلِيمِ**.

And said, "Glory be to the Lord Who hath held me  
worthy to see your love."

## SECTION XXII.

When came the peaceful crown, Chosroës, king of  
kings of Persia,

Who had been helped by the mighty and Christian  
kingdom, and

910 When Mâr Ishô'-Yahbh<sup>1</sup> of Arzôn, the holy man, was  
still

Patriarch of the East, and held the chief rule in the  
Church,

There was a mighty famine<sup>2</sup> in every place, especially  
in Margâ and in Nineveh.

The locusts came up from the lower countries and  
covered the earth,

And they spoiled, | and laid waste, and destroyed Fol. 32 b  
all the crops and plants,

915 And all fruit trees and trees of the forest, and every  
green herb.

And they defiled the springs, and fountains, and  
wells of water,

And they left to men nothing whatsoever whereby  
to console themselves in their trouble.

[Page 152] And the people dried and cooked the  
locusts and laid them up in their houses,

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, Ishô'-yahbh I. who sat from A. D. 580 to A. D. 595. For an account of him see Gismondi, *Maris Amri et Slibae*, pt. I. p. 49; pt. II. p. 26 (Latin translation).

<sup>2</sup> On famines in Mesopotamia see the notes in *Book of Governors*, vol. II. pp. 336, 337.

That they might take the place of the daily bread  
and be food for them in the time of famine.

920 And the people sowed everywhere millet, and summer  
peas,

And cucumbers, and water melons, and other small  
vegetables,

And we also, having no means of help, for we had  
no seed whatsoever,

During the famine gathered together locusts like all  
other folk,

Our Rabbâ Bar-'Idtâ himself came forth from his  
retreat,

925 And urged us to do this work—to collect, and cook,  
and dry, the locusts.

And many of the brethren, who were feeble of hope  
and childish of heart,

Wished to depart from this place to a country where-  
in bread was to be found.

Fol. 33 a And the holy man cried | unto them, and said unto  
them, “What then, my friends,

“Where can ye flee from the smiting of the Lord of  
hosts? For

930 “If He seeketh to correct you, whithersoever ye go,  
there He is;

“But it is meet that we should bear His correction  
as a thing of benefit,

“For our God, the Lord of the universe, doeth nothing  
idly.

“Behold the wretched children of this world, who  
have sons, and daughters,

“And on whom heavy burdens rest, they endure, and  
sit quietly in their houses,

935 "And we who have neither wives nor anxiety, shall we blaspheme God, the Lord of all ?

"Which of all the saints hath not been afflicted in this world ?

"Look ye, my beloved, at Abraham, the father of the [Hebrew] nation and of the Gentiles,

"Behold, he was the friend of the God of the universe, and the son of the house of righteousness,

"After he was in the land of promise which had been promised unto him,

940 "The famine waxed strong upon him, and he went into Egypt, and his wife was taken away from him ;

"And Isaac in like manner suffered loss when he went down to Abimelech of Philistia ;

"So also was it with Jacob, the head of the Tribes, and also with many others,

"[Page 153] And with Elisha, and the sons of the Pro- Fol. 33 b phets, and Elijah, the prophet of the Spirit.

"And if God chastised the righteous men, of the dust of whose feet we are not worthy,

945 "And all [other] men, and they confessed (*or, praised*) Him,

"It is the more fitting that we should bear the chastisement of the Lord.

"Nay, my beloved, act not thus, for this would be a disgrace unto monks.

"Sit ye down then, and doubt not concerning the faithfulness of Christ,

"For Whose certain hope and love ye have forsaken everything.

950 "And I, the wretched one, Bar-'Idtâ, your servant and your brother in the Lord,

“Pledge you by God that ye shall not lack sustenance.”  
 Then the brethren who had made ready to depart,  
 having heard the words of the holy man,  
 Returned and sat down in their cells, and took refuge  
 in contemplation and silence,  
 And according to the word of the old man [ate bread],  
 day by day, although insufficiently,

955 —For the compassion of God was not unmindful of us—  
 And the believing man Zandhâprôkh,<sup>1</sup> the father of  
 Têrîš-Îshô<sup>2</sup>, came,

Fol. 34 a And gave to Rabban one | thousand silver staters to  
 buy food therewith,  
 And the three camels which we had with us, and  
 two mules,

Which the pious Mâr Abhâ had given us. And Malbêd,  
 the believing man who is mentioned<sup>2</sup> above,

960 Sent our Rabban to the country of Media, [and to]  
 the Hûzâyê,

And to the countries of Nisibis, and he brought [back]  
 food for his monastery,

Together with the gifts of Mâr Abhâ, the holy man  
 and shepherd of Nineveh,

And of the free men of Bêth Ghûrbâk, and of this  
 Malbêd our neighbour.

And to each of the brethren [and] solitary monks  
 was given

965 Every day a limited portion [of food], that is to say,  
 by strict measure.

And the poor and the orphans gathered together  
 unto us, and for the need of their lives

<sup>1</sup> See above, lines 441, 642 and 808.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, “written.”

Rabban gave unto them also with us a portion like unto our own.

[Page 154] And we began to complain that we were not bound to feed others,

And he with a sad sigh entreated [us], saying, "Nay, my sons, do not this thing,

970 "For perhaps for their sakes our Lord will at this time feed us also,

"And because of these needy ones our Lord may bring food for us."

And Rabban | Bar-'Idtâ, being afraid lest we should Fol. 34 b neglect the poor,

Did not entrust the dividing of their portion of bread to any of the brethren,

But he himself used to sit down from mid-day to mid-day,

975 And the poor would pass before him, and he would give [each of] them two bread-cakes and [some] locusts,

And for the little orphans he would set the portion [of each] in his bosom,

And he would pass his hand over his head, and say, "Deliverance draweth nigh."

And the brethren being many blessed God for His bread—

Now they were more in number than a hundred— and the poor were more than we.

980 And for twenty days, more or less, there came five [loaves] of bread,

And we never remained for a whole day without [some] bread or food.

And the believing men in Great Bâbhëthâ brought two loads of wheat,

But our Rabban would hardly accept them ; and he said unto them,

“My sons, have care for the nunnery of the holy woman Hânah-Íshô<sup>1</sup> !

985 “And the Lord will add unto your reward in the resurrection of the righteous and good”.

And when the Governor of times willed the famine  
Fol. 35 a passed away and abundance came,

And many died of sicknesses, and boils, and burning sores [caused by] the abundance.

In this year by the grace of [our Lord] Hânah-Íshô<sup>1</sup> departed from this world

To the life which is for ever and ever ; may her prayer protect us from the Evil One !

[Page 155]

### SECTION XXIII.

990 In this year the blessed man received revelations Concerning the dispersion which happened afterwards to the monastery from which he went forth,

And he said, “Great things will be wrought by God

“In the matter of the monastery of our Rabbâ, Mâr

Abraham the holy man,

“And it will be imagined by men of the outer world who are simple and foolish

995 “That they will take place through attacks of devils, or through the [evil] nature of men,

“But our God, Who is all-wise, will bring out from [these] matters

“A cause of great benefits which will be beneficial to both sides.

<sup>1</sup> I. e., the nunnery which his sister had built.

“Even as the flight of Jacob through Esau his brother,  
 “And the selling of Joseph, and also the murder  
 which Moses committed,  
 1000 “And David, whom Saul persecuted, and all the  
 other [similar] matters,

Fol. 35 b

“Took place by the Providence of God for the benefit  
 of the many.

“And thus will it be as concerning the congregation<sup>1</sup>  
 of the holy man Mâr Abraham,

“The fathers of whom shall be scattered thence by  
 reason of a certain offence.”

Now after a year or two his word[s] actually came  
 to pass,

1005 When Mâr Bâbhai<sup>2</sup> the Great, that austere man, was  
 head of that monastery.

After the blessed and holy man Mâr Dâd-Îshô<sup>3</sup> had  
 gone to his rest,

A strife<sup>4</sup> took place in the monastery, and because  
 thereof many went out [therefrom].

Mâr Èliyâ,<sup>5</sup> the holy man, and Mâr Hénân-Îshô<sup>6</sup>, the  
 glorious man,

Departed to the blessed man Abbâ John,<sup>7</sup> the chosen one,

<sup>1</sup> I. e., the monks in the Monastery of Mâr Abraham of Izlâ.

<sup>2</sup> The story is told by Thomas of Margâ; see my *Book of Governors*, vol. II. pp. 46, 47f.

<sup>3</sup> See the account of his life in *Book of Governors*, vol. II. p. 42; his name means “gift of Jesus”.

<sup>4</sup> It arose because some of the monks kept their wives in the out-buildings of the monastery.

<sup>5</sup> See *Book of Governors*, vol. II. p. 50, where the story of the dispersion of the monks is told by Thomas of Margâ.

<sup>6</sup> See *Book of Governors*, vol. II. p. 66; he was the nephew of Èliyâ.

<sup>7</sup> Also called “John the Elder”.

1010 And James,<sup>1</sup> and John,<sup>2</sup> and Sahrôwai,<sup>3</sup> and Sabhr-Îshô,<sup>4</sup> and Sâbûkht,<sup>5</sup> with them ;

And Ûkhâmâ,<sup>6</sup> and other brethren, to Arzôn,<sup>7</sup> and Kardô, and Bêth Nûhdérâ,<sup>8</sup>

[Page 156] And John,<sup>9</sup> and Zékhâ-Îshô, and Abraham to the country of Dâsân.<sup>10</sup>

And Benjamin, and Peter, and Ârdâ,<sup>11</sup> and Îshai, and Paul, and John,

Fol. 36 a These came, by the might of God, to that Monastery of Bêth 'Âbhê,<sup>12</sup>

1015 Before the coming of Rabban Mâr Jacob to this place.

And Mâr Jacob himself and Bar-Nôn went to lead the lives of anchorites in the mountain.<sup>13</sup>

Afterwards, through a revelation, Mâr Jacob returned to Mount Îzlâ,<sup>14</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He went to Abbâ Hebisha.

<sup>2</sup> He went to Nehêl.

<sup>3</sup> He built a monastery at Arzôn.

<sup>4</sup> He went to the Monastery of Abbâ Shappîrâ ; see *B. O.*, III. 1. pp. 255, 469.

<sup>5</sup> He went to Bêth Zabhdai, a district on the right bank of the Tigris near Jazîrat ibn 'Omar.

<sup>6</sup> *I. e.*, the "Black" ; he also went to Bêth Zabhdai.

<sup>7</sup> A town of Armenia on the borders of Mesopotamia.

<sup>8</sup> A Nestorian Church province ; its most northerly point was Halmôn, and the most southerly Bâlâdh.

<sup>9</sup> *I. e.*, John of Adharmâh, a bishopric which lay between Nisibis and Mâwsel.

<sup>10</sup> The Arabic Jabal Dâsin, a mountainous tract of country which lay along the Upper Zâbh, and which has been identified with the Gâra Mountains.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas of Marga gives Adâdâ.

<sup>12</sup> The history of this famous monastery was written by Thomas of Margâ ; see my *Book of Governors*, 2 vols. London, 1893.

<sup>13</sup> *I. e.*, Mount Kardô.

<sup>14</sup> See Thomas of Margâ, Bk. I. Chap. XXI.

And afterwards, from there also, through strife,  
providentially,  
He went forth, with others, and came<sup>1</sup> to Bêth 'Âbhê<sup>2</sup>  
on the Zâbhâ,  
1020 And became the head and founder of that godly  
congregation,  
Which increased through the mighty deeds and wonders  
which God wrought by his hands.  
And as long as Mâr Jacob was alive, great love in  
Christ  
Existed between him and our Rabban, and between  
his congregation and ours.

## SECTION XXIV.

And Sâhdônâ<sup>3</sup> also, of Mâr Jacob's monastery,<sup>4</sup> whose  
history he himself wrote,<sup>5</sup>  
1025 After the death of Mâr Jacob preached heresy.  
And Rabban Bar-'Idtâ called him, and admonished  
him and rebuked him, but he would not be  
persuaded ;  
And he said unto him, "Christ is about to cast thee  
out of the Holy Church."<sup>6</sup>  
After the death of the holy old man, Mâr Bar-'Idtâ, |

<sup>1</sup> His arrival took place A. D. 595.

<sup>2</sup> It lay on the right bank in the mountains to the south of Herpa  
under Mount Niphates, and was nearly 60 miles from Mâwsel.

<sup>3</sup> *I. e.*, the "little martyr", an ironical appellation.

<sup>4</sup> The story is told by Thomas of Margâ, Bk. II. Chap. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas of Margâ (Bk. I. Chap. 24) complains of several omis-  
sions which he found in Sâhdônâ's life of Rabban Jacob.

<sup>6</sup> Also mentioned by Thomas of Margâ (Bk. II. Chap. 6).

Fol. 36<sup>b</sup> He became Bishop of Mâhôzâ of Îyârâwân<sup>1</sup> of Bêth Garmai.

1030 And the corrupt, unclean, and despicable book was discovered

In the days of the great and holy man Mâr Emmêh,<sup>2</sup> the Catholicus.

And the blessed man, Mâr-Îshô<sup>c</sup>-Yahbh,<sup>3</sup> who was of fiery zeal, having become

Catholicus—now he was from Adiabene—cast Sâhdôنâ out of the Church.

And in very deed were fulfilled concerning him the word[s] of the holy old man,

1035 Who said, “Thou art about to be cast out of the Church under a final ban.”

[Page 157]

## SECTION XXV.

In the days of the Patriarch of the East, Mâr Sabhr-Îshô<sup>c</sup>,<sup>4</sup>

When the mighty man Khusrau (Chosroës), king of the Persians, was reigning,

When the heads of the Church went down, and our father, and Mâr Bâbhai,

<sup>1</sup> Or Mâhôzâ dhê Ariwân, a town which was probably situated on the Little Zâbh.

<sup>2</sup> He sat from A. D. 644 to A. D. 647; an account of him will be found in Gismondi, *Maris Amri et Slibae*, pt. I. p. 55; pt. II. p. 32; and *B. O.*, III. 1. pp. 114, 115, 472.

<sup>3</sup> *I. e.*, the son of Basþohmagh, of Kuphlânâ in Adiabene, who succeeded Mâr Emmêh in the Patriarchate; the text of five of his letters concerning Sâhdôنâ will be found in *Book of Governors*, vol. II. p. 132 ff.

<sup>4</sup> He sat from A. D. 596 to A. D. 604.

And set down in writing the orthodox faith of the great Church of the East,

1040 At that time, [I say], Rabban sent after the venerable Ishô'-Sabhrân,

The head of the Monastery of the holy Mâr Mattai of Mount Alpâp.<sup>1</sup>

And having come, and gone into the cell of Rabban, who was blessed by him, |

Rabban Bar-'Idtâ answered and said unto Ishô'-Fol. 37 a Sabhrân,

"Behold, O our brother, how long ago is it since thou didst entreat me to let thee leave thy place

1045 "And come here? but I would not do so, because there was no reason of necessity.

"This is the will of the Lord [now], that thou and thy companions should come here,

"Together with the brethren of the Monastery of Kôkhtâ,<sup>2</sup> at once, quickly, and with haste.

"For I Bar-'Idtâ have seen with the eye of the Holy Spirit,

"Mount Alpâp filled with wild wasps,

1050 "Which were mighty in their bodies, and strong in their fierceness,

"And swift in their flight, and ready to do harm.

"And in the temple which is there is laid the nest

"Of a beautiful, white dove, which hath three young ones,

"And the wasps wished to go in to the dove, and were unable, but at length they did,

<sup>1</sup> I. e., Jabal Maklûb.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 205.



1055 "And they made the dove and her young to fly away,  
and they took up their abode in her nest, and  
had their rest therein.

"And after a day or two the dove came three times |  
Fol. 37 b "And looked in, and wished to enter the temple, but  
she was unable to do so of her own strength.

"And I know that the grace of the Lord which is  
there will quickly depart,

"[Page 158] And also that the heretics will come and  
dwell there;

1060 "And these the sons of our doctrine will not be able  
by force

"To drive out thence, but only by our Lord.

"Now therefore, take with thee a beast and two of  
the brethren,

"And take your possessions and everything which ye  
have, and come here quickly.

"Let one of you pass by the Monastery of Kôkhtâ  
and inform the brethren,

1065 "That they also may come with you, together with  
everything which they possess."

So Ishô-Sabhrân and his companions did according  
to the command of Rabban,

And they came to our Monastery, and built them-  
selves cells, and dwelt therein.

And two months, more or less, had not passed since  
the words [were spoken]

When the wicked and unclean Zakkâi, that shorn  
follower of Severus,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, Severus of Antioch, A. D. 512—519. He embraced the Mono-  
physite doctrine, and became the head of the "Acephalai", or party of

1070 And his disciples, who were sorcerers, captured those places,

By means of the abominable assistance of Gabriel, the physician of Chosroës.

Now this evil man Zakkāi | worked many injuries Fol. 38. a

Upon our poor people, who were sons of the teaching of the Apostles,

And he wished, like Satan, to destroy all the believing folk.

1075 Through his sorcery the devils went openly in subjection unto him,

For, in addition to being a wicked man, he was also a sorcerer.

God sent forth this man that by him He might try this district,

Even as the foul Antiochus [was sent] against the holy men of the house of Maccabaeus.

Certain villages he did not trample under foot that he might defile them with his own wickedness.

1080 And seeing that our holy man was glorious in the wisdom of understanding

He sent to him gold and silver, as it were for the expenses of the monastery ;

But Rabban sent back the messengers with insult and revilings, saying,

“Say ye unto him that we have no need for this thine abominable bribe.”

[Page 159] Then Zakkāi acted cunningly in his wickedness, and he wrote to Rabban humbly,

Monophysites who rejected the Council of Chalcedon in 451, and the Henoticon of Zeno which was promulgated in 482.

1085 Saying, "We know that thou lovest neither gold nor silver,

"But I have certain disciples, command that they come, and thou shalt teach them."

Fol. 38 b And Rabban returned his letter, and deemed it unworthy of an answer.

And the holy old man, Rabban Bar-'Idtâ, said unto his sons,

"The villages in various parts of [the district] of Nineveh, will, little by little, accept him."

1090 The brethren said unto him, "Even Bêth Ghûrbâk, O our father?"

And he said to them, "God forbid ! This shall never be. Until Christ revealeth Himself

"Bêth Ghûrbâk shall keep the truth of the doctrine of our Lord sound and whole."

And thus was it with all the villages which are in faith like unto it,

Karmêlîsh,<sup>1</sup> and Bêth Zâbhê, and Bêth Bôrê ; these kept the faith,

1095 And they repelled the ambassadors of Zakkâi, and drove them from their borders.

The sons of these four villages, which were planted in the field of Christ,

Drank of the spiritual rain of the true faith.

These believing villages were the glory of Nineveh, For from them at all times there went forth philosophers of the house of our Lord ;

1100 Moreover, O my sons, I say unto you, according as it hath been revealed unto me by our Lord,

<sup>1</sup> I. e., كرمليش ; see Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, p. 200.

The doctrine of error shall never, never enter into Margâ. |

### SECTION XXVI.

They say that there were twelve devils which used <sup>Fol. 39 a</sup> to cleave to Zakkâi,

And that all those devils in error used to perform his commands.

And he sent one called Nânâ<sup>1</sup> from Bêth Ghûrbâ, which is on the Tigris,

1105 Against Harbath Sénônîthâ, a village to the west of us.

And others who brought with them gold, and silver, and gifts,

[Page 160] To the soldiers who guarded the roads, and they spake unto them, saying,

“Guard ye for us this man our companion who wisheth to dwell near you,

“Lest any man injure him in any way whatsoever”; and they promised to guard him.

1110 And there was there a cave in a certain rock which was called Dairâ dhë Neksâ;

In the night he used to sleep therein, and in the day he sat on the road-side.

And he used to recite certain passages [from the Gospels], and write, and read, and make copies of the Scriptures, after the manner of Satan,

And to every passer-by who asked a question he made a false answer,

[Saying], “I am from the Monastery of Mâr Mattai, and I am a disciple of Mâr Zakkâi,

<sup>1</sup> See Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, pp. 130—161.

1115 "Who hath sent me to Mâr Bar-'Idtâ, his friend and loving companion,

Fol. 39 b "That I may write and make a copy of | the Commentary on the Holy Scriptures which he wrote; "And he hath promised to come to us, and then he and we shall be in loving agreement."

And Rabban heard, and said of him, "Let him alone, my sons, let him alone;

"Nânâ and Zakkâi shall be put to shame in the end."

### SECTION XXVII.

1120 And Mâr Yônâdhâbh,<sup>1</sup> the Metropolitan of Margâ, having come,

He appointed Mëbhârakh Bishop of the country of Dâsân and Bêth Tûrê.<sup>2</sup>

And everything which Nânâ, the erring one, had done was heard by Mâr Yônâdhâbh,

And he rose up and went to Great Bâbhëthâ in his godly zeal.

And he sent for the guards from Adiabene who were his friends,

1125 And said unto them, "What is the work of that monk who is with you?"

And they related to him the matter as it was, and he said to them, "He is my enemy."

Then he sent one of them, and commanded him to bring all his papers,

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps to be identified with Mâr Yônâdhâbh of Adiabene, who flourished in the time of Bâbhai.

<sup>2</sup> A mountainous district in the Gâra Mountains.

And having brought the stinking Nânâ, he stood up before Mâr Yônâdhâbh.

They took his wallet | and opened it, and shook it <sup>Fol. 40 a</sup> out before him several times,

1130 [Page 161] He saith unto him, "Hast thou seen Rabban?" And he said, "I have never seen him [before],

"But others have compelled me [to do] this. I have sinned, forgive me, my lord."

And the pious man hastily commanded them, and they brought fire into the midst,

And straightway he burned all his books and quires of books.

Then he sent to Bêth Nârkôs<sup>1</sup> and brought fifty young men from the schools,

1135 And his disciple wrote unto them a paper, and delivered unto them thus:—

"This is Nânâ Iscariot, the disciple of Zakkâi, the accursed one !

"This is Nânâ Satan, the disciple of Zakkâi, the accursed one !

"This is Nânâ, the man of folly, the disciple of Zakkâi, the sinner !

"This is Nânâ, the senseless one, the disciple of Zakkâi, the wicked one !"

1140 And whilst the first [company of men] were saying, "This is Nânâ, the unbeliever,"

He commanded others to make answer, "Woe unto thee, O Zakkâi, thou wicked one !

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the place where Bâbhai established a school; see *Book of Governors*, vol. II. p. 297.

“Fie upon thee, O Nânâ, thou crafty one, thou vessel  
of pollution and wickedness !

“Woe unto thee, Zakkâi, O wicked one, from God  
the Avenger !

“Thou hast destroyed by thy sorcery the people who  
Fol. 40 b were in Mount | Alpâp,<sup>1</sup>

1145 “O Zakkâi, priest of devils, woe unto thee from Christ  
our Lord !

“Woe unto thee, O Zakkâi, thou sorcerer, thou dis-  
ciple of the wicked Devil !

“Woe unto thee, O thou broken-backed Nânâ, thou  
servant of the Calumniator !”

And Rabban commanded and they brought [him]  
soot, and he spread it over the face of Nânâ,  
And he tied his hands behind him, and they hung a  
girdle about his neck,

1150 And he commanded that they should make him to  
pass as a mockery by all the villages which  
were near,

And that they should say, “This is Nânâ, the servant  
of Zakkâi, the deceiver.”

And Mâr Yônâdhâbh having put Zakkâi, the follower  
of Severus, to shame,

The iniquity of the sons of Zakkâi, of accursed life,  
became known.

<sup>1</sup> *Jabal Maklûb.*

1155 Not by his wiles, nor by men, but by the devils  
 which clave unto him, [saying],  
 "Nay, my sons, the wicked ones shall not be per-  
 mitted either to harm one of you,  
 "Or to draw nigh unto him ; be of good cheer, and  
 ye shall fear nothing."

Now, | one night these devils came against our Rabbâ, Fol. 41 a  
 And vexed him the whole night, even as he spake  
 unto us with his own mouth,

1160 [Saying], "Already in the evening I perceived the  
 devils, and I stood up in prayer against them,  
 "And the whole night long I ceased not to do com-  
 bat with them.

"They appeared in the forms of black, stinking ravens,  
 "And they flew upwards and tried to force themselves  
 into my chamber to destroy me,  
 "But whilst the angel of God was casting stones of  
 fire at

1165 "Each one which approached me from the Evil One  
 and his hosts,  
 "I passed the night in striving, and they were un-  
 able to smite me,  
 "And before the dawn they departed unto Zakkâi  
 who had sent them."

### SECTION XXIX.

Again in the Monastery of Mâr Addônâ<sup>1</sup> there dwelt  
 a certain monk,  
 The venerable old man, Bar Sâhdê, and with him  
 was a brother by name Phinehas.

<sup>1</sup> It was situated in Bêth Nuhâdhrâ ; see Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, p. 213.

1170 When the error of Zakkâi entered in here by the  
bribes of Gabriel,

He drove out the light of Divine Grace from the  
believing men, [and from]

Fol. 41 b The inhabitants of Bêth Bar-Têlâi, and of Bêth Daniel  
Râpyâ,

Two famous villages which were under that mountain.  
Those wicked men threatened the blessed old man  
Bar Sâhdê,

1175 [Page 163] Saying, "If thou wilt not agree with us,  
depart, lest we strangle thee."

And the old man fled, and came to Bêth Râstâk,  
to the village of Ardôd,

And he built himself a cell there upon a hill and  
dwelt therein.

And the old man had books in the Monastery of Mâr  
Addônâ,

And in the haste of fear he forgot to take them with him ;

1180 And he went up to our old man and told him. Rabban  
saith unto him,

"Take heed, and go not thither, for they will kill  
thee for the sake of the money.

"But seek out a good man that he may go there at  
eventide,

"And let him stay the night there as if to pray, and  
in the night he can bring thy books."

And the man went and stayed there the night, and  
brought the books of Bar Sâhdê,

1185 And he also brought with him the veil which was  
hanging in the martyrium.

Now when the old man saw the veil, which was very  
fine and beautiful,

He said, | “Get thee up, and hang it in the martyrium <sup>Fol. 42 a</sup> of the Monastery of Rabban Bar-‘Idtâ.”

And he did as the old man had commanded him, and gave the veil to the sacristan.

And the sacristan hung it up in the martyrium, above the cross, as he had been commanded.

<sup>1190</sup> Now as soon as that veil had entered into the Monastery of Mâr our father,

All the error of Satan compassed us on every side. And all the peoples were stirred up to come to the Monastery of Rabban Bar-‘Idtâ,

Not only [those of] Margâ and Nineveh, but from remote countries.

And great wonder took hold upon every man at the change which had come upon us,

<sup>1195</sup> For the monks who dwelt together<sup>1</sup> were neither able to bake bread,

Nor to empty the corn bins (?) or the jars of oil, Nor to tie up or to unloose the wine skins which were very many.

And the whole assembly of the devils were shooting out their venom upon us,

And we became a thing trodden under foot as the gazingstock of Jews and heathen.

<sup>1200</sup> [Page 164] And Rabban Bar-‘Idtâ answered and said in grief unto his disciples,

“Dear children, beloved sons, | what hath come upon <sup>Fol. 42 b</sup> us, what hath happened unto us?

“Can it be that the sorceries of Zakkâi the wicked one, the shrine of devils,

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, the coenobites.

“Have come upon us through our sluggishness to make us flee from our place?

“Let every man among you, O my beloved, pray to the Lord in his cell,

1205 “That God will point out to us this evil matter.”

And the blessed man Mâr Yôzâdhâk saw a vision through God

Of a hateful, black man standing in our martyrium Of this holy monastery, and he was girt about with a red tunic (*or*, girdle),

And in his hand was a glass vessel filled with blood.

1210 And the foul smell of that blood came outside the temple;

And the man sprinkled the blood upon the men who were going therein,

And they lickd it up with their tongues with great gratification,

And when it was well nigh exhausted, he spat in the vessel and the blood increased.

And, when, being outside, I asked, “When did this Ethiopian come

1215 “Hither and enter our monastery?” they said unto me, “Recently.”

I said to them, “How is it that our Rabban doth not know about him?”

They said unto me, “Your Rabbâ will very soon |  
Fol. 43 a learn [about him].”

And I saw in [my] vision that I was running to inform our Rabbâ

Of that stinking impurity which was in our martyrium.

<sup>1</sup> Presumably Yôzâdhâk begins the narrative of his dream here.

1220 But the Ethiopian ran there before me, and he cast towards me

Some of that stinkiness which he held, and I was in great affliction.

And by reason of the terror which had seized me I woke up trembling,

And I ran by night to Rabban, and I related unto him what I had seen.

Our Rabbâ said unto me, "That error which hath come upon us

1225 "[Page 165] Is set in our martyrium; call the sacristan that I may enquire of him."

So they called the sacristan, and he came, and our father asked him, saying,

"What is this error which hath destroyed our monastery, and which is making us to flee?

"Tell me if any one of the heretics hath passed the night here."

He saith to him, "O my lord, God forbid! I know of nothing whatsoever,

1230 "Except a small worked veil which Phinehas brought to us,

"And which his old Rabbâ sent, saying, 'Hang it up in the martyrium!'

"And behold, the veil which he sent is hanging up in the martyrium above | the cross."

Then Rabban said, "This is the whole error of Satan.

"Go ye, heat the monastery furnace, and do thou, and the brethren who live together, go

1235 "And sing one section of the Psalms of David in the martyrium,

Fol. 43 b

"That the devil which dwelleth in that veil of error  
may not harm you.

"And raise ye a heavenly hymn, and 'Our Lord and  
Father, which art in heaven',

"And take ye the veil, and quickly<sup>1</sup> cast [it] into the  
fiery furnace.

"As soon as it cometh to an end shall perish the  
error which hath entered in to vex us."

1240 Now when the veil had thus perished, those who were  
passing the night in the monastery

Did not remain until the dawn, but immediately went  
back,

And every man, wherever he came from, returned to  
his house in haste.

And even those who came in the morning did not  
go in to pray in the temple,

For the adorable God had not brought them to pay  
homage unto Him,

1245 But a devil had called them that by their means he  
might trouble the monks.

And our father said unto his disciples, "Let no man  
Fol. 44 a eat or | drink

"Of what the devils of that sorcerer and deceiver  
Zakkâi have brought."

Then our holy father commanded, and it was loaded  
up on three camels,

And distributed among the orphans and widows of  
the villages of Margâ for food.

<sup>1</sup> The text has *દુર્લભિ*.

[Page 166]

## SECTION XXX.

1250 Now therefore we will inform the believers of the visions and revelations

Which came unto the blessed man before they [the events] actually came to pass;

And how before matters had worked themselves out  
The holy man had known of them, and had made them known to his friends.

In the time of Rabban there was peace between the two great kingdoms

1255 Of the Greeks and of the Persians which belonged to the Emperor Mauricius and Chosroës.

Our Rabban saw in a revelation of the spirit that a war would take place in the west.

Among the Greeks with each other, and that also through the war of the Persians,

Great cities, and fortresses, and many towns

The Assyrian would destroy ; and that of the mighty men of the sons of Yâwân

1260 He would make captives, and pillage and destroy ; and, as far as he had | the power [to do so], Fol. 44 b would make a mockery of

The churches, and monasteries, and people of Jesus Christ ;

And then the Greeks would come, wasting and taking vengeance at will,

And that the bonds which the eastern Persians had cast upon them [would be broken],

And the Greeks would pour out much blood in the land of Persia,



1265 And would shew pity neither on believers, nor holy men, nor anchorites.

“And” [he said], “Our Lord hath revealed unto me that in this our poor monastery

“The sword shall have no dominion, and no plundering shall come upon it,

“And they shall not take from us the smallest thing, and they shall depart leaving

“With us certain persons to prevent their fellow soldiers from doing us harm.”

1270 And afterwards strife began between Mauricius and Phocas,<sup>1</sup>

And Phocas, the rebel, slew Mauricius,<sup>2</sup> the Emperor of Yâwân.

When Chosroës the mighty heard that Phocas reigned in his lord’s stead

[Page 167] He went up and captured the city of Dârâ,<sup>3</sup> and destroyed and laid waste mercilessly.

He laid waste the city of Jerusalem also, and Alexandria (*sic*), and Edessa,

1275 And they took into captivity both small | and great  
Fol. 45 a with prideful insolence.

<sup>1</sup> Phocas was a native of Cappadocia, and the leader of the revolt against Mauricius ; he was proclaimed Emperor of Constantinople on November 23, A. D. 602, and reigned until A. D. 610, in which year he was beheaded, and his body burnt.

<sup>2</sup> He and his five sons were beheaded on November 27, A. D. 602.

<sup>3</sup> The famous city which was situated near Nisibis, and was built by the Emperor Anastasius A. D. 507, with the view of protecting the dominions of the Byzantine Greeks against invasion by the Persians ; the fortifications of the city were very strong, and it was well supplied with water.

Then came the Greeks who smote, and plundered,  
and destroyed everything,  
No man escaped from the hand of the children of  
Esau.<sup>1</sup>

Then Rabban gathered together all his sons, and they  
went into the temple of the Lord,  
And stood upon ashes, and made supplication to be  
delivered from the Greeks.

1280 The first company having gone up to pass through  
Margâ passed the night in Ardôd,  
And Leo,<sup>2</sup> the captain of the host of the company of  
the proud Greeks,  
Saw in his dream the angel of the Lord, in the form  
of our old man,  
A bald old man, small of stature, who stood in front  
of him threateningly,  
And holding a cross of light in his mighty right hand,  
1285 And a staff of fire in his left hand, and the Gospel  
on his breast.  
And Leo being asleep in his tent, the old man smote  
him on his side, and made him stand up,  
And he fell down and bowed before him to the earth,  
and said to him, "What is it, O my lord?"  
He saith unto him, "See, O Leo, thou must not by  
any means enter the monastery |  
"Of the company of my children, and thou must not Fol. 45 b harm one man therein.

<sup>1</sup> The allusion here must be to the tribes of maraudings Arabs of Mesopotamia who completed the destruction of property and life in Asia Minor which the Persians had begun.

<sup>2</sup> Probably the eunuch Leontius, who was defeated by Khusrau II at Dârâ.

1290 "I am Bar-'Idtâ, a stranger, who came from the neighbourhood of the river Euphrates,

"The country of your blessed dominion, and I live here."

Leo, being afraid, saith unto him, "Nay, master, thou servant of Christ,

"I swear by the Cross of our Lord, the object in which the Greeks boast,

"That I will not harm one man belonging to your holy monastery,

1295 "But I will pass by you in the peace and love of Christ."

He saith unto him, "If thou doest this thou shalt go<sup>1</sup> with victory and peace

"Into the country of the mighty Greeks"; and the angel left him and departed.

[Page 168] And when the courageous Leo had woke up, he was afraid with an exceedingly great fear, And he determined in his mind to do according to what he had seen in his dream.

1300 And when the Greeks came like eagles and surrounded our monastery,

Leo went down and sat before the cross which marched at the head of their ranks,

And cried unto his host, and warned it, taking an oath by the cross of light,

Saying, "O Greeks, no one of you shall get down from his horse." |

Fol. 46 a And he sent and called our old man, and behold, when he had gone forth, and was coming towards him

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, return.

1305 To the place where he was seated upon a hill, which  
was by the graveyard of the brethren,  
Leo saw that it was he who had appeared unto him  
in the night in the form of an angel;  
And he rose up to meet him, and embraced and  
kissed him, and when the brethren saw [this]  
they became of good cheer.  
And Leo told Rabban Bar-'Idtâ everything which had  
appeared [to him] in the night,  
And the old man rose up and did homage to the  
Greek, and blessed and thanked him,  
1310 And he urged him to go into the monastery to rest,  
but he would not accept this,  
Saying to our Rabbâ, "Pray for me that I may con-  
quer in our Lord."  
The brethren said unto Leo, "We beseech thee, O  
king,  
"To complete for us the act of grace which thou  
hast done towards us in Christ,  
"And leave behind thee with us one of these brave  
men who are with thee,  
1315 "So that those who shall come after them may neither  
harm nor destroy us."  
Then Leo the king appointed for us a certain young  
man of the sons of his house,  
Together with two of his vigorous young men, and  
they departed not until the war was over.  
And when he wished to depart from us, | our Rabban Fol. 46 b  
commanded and gave him  
Fifty silver staters; and [thus] harm passed away  
from us.

[Page 169]

## SECTION XXXI.

1320 There were in the congregation of Rabban certain wonderful, mighty men :  
 One of these was Mâr Yôzâdhâk,<sup>1</sup> from Bêth Shîûnâyê, of Nineveh ;  
 And another was Hôrmîzd,<sup>2</sup> and from the country of Persia was he,  
 That is to say, from the city of Shîrâz ; and Simon<sup>3</sup> from the country of Kashkar.  
 And concerning them it was revealed to Rabban by the Lord, the All-knowing,  
 1325 That they were to be founders of monasteries like their guide and teacher.

## SECTION XXXII.

In his last year, the year wherein he departed from this world to Paradise,  
 A very young man whose name was Sergius was converted by him,  
 And certain of the old men blamed him for receiving him that was only a boy ;  
 And he said unto them, "This boy shall stand [as] a father to the congregation."  
 1330 Now after some years this boy was appointed shepherd of Adiabene,<sup>4</sup> |

<sup>1</sup> The master of Rabban Mâr Simon, who wrote the life of Rabban Hôrmîzd printed above. He seems to be mentioned in Gismondi, *Maris Amri*, pt. II. p. 32 (Latin trans.).

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 1 ff.

<sup>3</sup> The disciple of Mâr Yôzâdhâk, the friend of Rabban Hôrmîzd.

<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the Sergius who was a disciple of Mâr Abhâ, and is mentioned in *B. O.*, 86, 87, 171.

That is to say, the capital city of the province, and <sup>Fol. 47 a</sup> [thus] the prophecy of our father was fulfilled. And the lands, and the mill, and the vineyards belonging to this monastery he acquired, And all his care he devoted wholly to the maintenance of the monastery.

Now all these things which we have already written, and also those which have yet to be written,

<sup>1335</sup> Are witnesses of the spirit of prophecy which the holy old man had received.

### SECTION XXXIII.

In one of the narrow valleys which are round about the monastery of Rabban,

In a certain hole there dwelt a great and mighty snake,

Now that snake was more than ten cubits in length :

[Page 170] He was black and exceedingly loathsome, but none of us had, as yet, seen him.

<sup>1340</sup> And one of the coenobites from the village of Barzânê went

To bring wood on the camel, according to a custom which we had.

And he cut wood near the hole of that snake unwittingly,

And the snake came out from his hole, and set out to attack him. |

And the young man was terrified, and cried out, and <sup>Fol. 47 b</sup> his soul was carried away from him.

<sup>1345</sup> Now the nod of the Governor of the universe restrained the snake, and he went into his hole.

And when the time for the young man to come had arrived, and he appeared not,  
 And the day declined to its ending, and still *Îshôc-Yahbh* did not come,  
 The brethren went out to seek him, and they saw the camel feeding  
 At a distance and there was no man with him; and they marvelled, and wondered, and were astonished.

1350 And when little by little the coenobites had drawn nigh they saw [him] lying  
 [Where] he had fallen down in the morning of that day, and there was no living feeling in him.  
 Then they carried him and brought him to the community, and they informed the old man concerning his death.  
 The holy old man on hearing [this] was greatly moved and pained, and he wept exceedingly,  
 And he took the oil of prayer, and anointed the young man with courage,  
 1355 And stood above him praying; and he lifted up his voice, and said,  
 "O our Lord Jesus, the Redeemer, Who hast power to do everything,  
 "And to Whom it is easy to bring into being those which have no being,  
 Fol. 48 a "And Who only doest | for those of Thine household such things as are good for them,  
 "And Who bringest forth out of tribulations the confession of the greatness of Thy love,  
 1360 "I entreat Thee, O our Lord, to bring to life this young man,

“Even as Thou didst bring Ṭabīthā to life in Joppa<sup>1</sup>  
by the hands of Thy holy man Simon.”

And with this word he took hold of the young man,  
and roused him up, saying,

“My son Ḥshō‘-Yahbh, rise, and come [hither], through  
our Lord Jesus Who giveth thee life.”

[Page 171] Then the young man opened his eyes, and  
looked on the old man, and spake with him;

1365 And he opened his mouth, and Rabban threw in oil  
of prayer, and he stood up.

On the morning of the morrow our holy old man  
took us all,

And we all went together to the door of the hole of  
that snake,

And we collected large stones, and we shut the  
snake in,

Rabban himself standing at the entrance to the hole,  
and building up the stones.

1370 And some little time afterwards unto every one who  
drew nigh

There would come the smell of the putrefying snake  
which died by the might of our Lord.

#### SECTION XXXIV.

Now Malbēd, the true believer | from the village of <sup>Fol. 48 b</sup> Barzānē,

Had an aged mother-in-law who for a very long time  
had not had good health,

And who had been lying upon a sick bed for many  
years past,

<sup>1</sup> Acts IX. 36—40.

1375 And she was weary of physicians, and they were not able to heal her.

And Malbêd came to Rabban, and entreated him to pray over her,

That she might either be worthy of the healing of the Lord, or that He would take her out of this world.

And Rabban gave Malbêd some martyrs' dust, commanding him to give it to her to drink in water,

And having given it to her to drink she was made whole in a day or two, and she ran to the monastery.

### SECTION XXXV.

1380 And again there was a certain poor woman in whom water had collected,

And her body was swollen and puffed out, and she was like a great skin bottle,

And by reason of the terrible appearance of her body every one who saw her turned away his face.

Now this woman was from the village of Bêth Mûsâyê,

[Page 172] And her kinsfolk came to Rabban and informed him concerning her.

1385 Then he blessed some water and cast [therein] holy  
Fol. 49 a oil, and gave it unto them,

And he commanded them, [saying], "When ye depart let them make her stand up,

"And drink this water, and let them pour some of it on her head."

And as soon as they had done this the foul water left her body,

And on that very day, and at that very time she received perfect healing.

## SECTION XXXVI.

1390 Now there was in the city of Nineveh a certain Jew  
who was a tailor,

When the blessed man Mâr Abhâ was building the  
temple of the castle therein,

And he had a beloved son who was grievously vexed  
with devils,

And every garment which he put on, and the raiment  
in which he was dressed he used to rend and  
tear into rags.

Now the Jew by the advocacy of Mâr Abhâ went to  
him,

1395 And he sealed him with the sign of the Cross, and  
the devil went out from his boy.

And this having happened the Jew became converted  
in his mind,

And he went to the monastery, and prayed in the  
temple, and accepted the living Cross,

Then having returned to his city of Nineveh, he went  
to the bishop,

And confessed the faith, and was baptized, | he and Fol. 49 b all his household.

1400 And he was mixed with the sheep of our Lord, and  
he placed his son in the school,

And he became learned in the Glorious Scriptures  
which are full of the Holy Spirit.

And when Mâr Éliyâ<sup>1</sup> came, and built the holy mon-  
astery,

<sup>1</sup> Mâr Éliyâ, who built the Monastery of Sa'îd in Mâwsel, and who  
flourished in the time of the Patriarch Ishô-yahbh of Arzôn.

He went to the blessed man and became a chosen monk.

### SECTION XXXVII.

Now there was also a certain man from the village of Perâth, whose name was Zedkôi ;<sup>1</sup>

1405 He had lived with his wife ten years, but was deprived of the blessing of children.

[Page 173] The believing man himself and his wife came in faith to Rabban,

And with bitter and sorrowful tears besought the blessing of bearing children.

Rabban answered and said unto the woman, "Wouldst thou have one son or two?"

She saith, "I want two; ask the Lord to give [them] unto me."

1410 The blessed man saith unto her, "If thou hast three sons

"Wilt thou give me one of them?" She saith unto him, "Yea, by God."

He saith unto her, "My daughter, take these three little cakes of martyrs' dust, |

Fol. 50 a "And go to thy house in faith, and each day take one little cake."

And having taken [them] in the confidence of Christ, at the return of the year she gave birth to a son,

1415 And she set him apart [in payment] of the vow to Rabban, and afterwards she gave birth to two sons.

Now when the first son had grown up he came to the monastery,

<sup>1</sup> *Or, Zedkowai.*

And became a disciple of the old men, and Rabban called him "Bar-Dairâ."<sup>1</sup>

## SECTION XXXVIII.

In the village of Bêth Kartëwâyê<sup>2</sup> there was a man whose name was Job,

And to this man, one night, a devil appeared in a dream,

1420 And he required of him, saying, "If in two days from this time

"Thou dost not worship the sun, and sacrifice an ox to me

"[As] an offering outside thy village, I will slay all thine household,

"And all thy sheep and cattle, and I will overthrow thy whole habitation."

Then the believing man woke up, and as soon as it was dawn, he knocked at the door of Rabban,

1425 And he repeated to our Rabbâ that which had been said [to him] in the night.

And Rabban | answered and said unto him, "Shew Fol. 50 b me thy sin before the Lord.

"For the Calumniator hath prevailed over thee in this wise to thy benefit."

The man answered and said, "There is in our village a certain wicked sorceress,

[Page 174] And, according to what they say, she eateth bread, and then receiveth the Glorious Mysteries,

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, the "son of the Monastery".

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, the country of the Kartaw Kurds, who appear to have lived in the region which lies to the west of the Little Zâbh ; see Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, p. 207.

1430 "But it is doubtful if the bread is, in truth, the holy Body of our Lord.  
"Why doth this not kill her? For behold she hath mocked Him for years."  
The old man answered and said unto him, "This is wickedness, and not sin.  
"Who art thou to cast blame upon the works of the Lord Most High?  
"Knowest thou what will happen unto that poor woman, O man,  
1435 "Either in this world or in that which is to come? For every man shall be rewarded according to his works."  
And Rabban made for him a washing from the cross which hung upon him,  
And he placed therein [some] prayer oil, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Spirit.  
And he commanded him that on the morrow, before eating, he and his household should drink Some of the water, and sprinkle some of it in his house, and also over all his sheep and cattle,  
1440 And that on the holy First Day of the week he should stand in sackcloth and ashes  
Fol. 51 a In the church of their village; | then would he be delivered from the hurt of devils.  
And Rabban further said, "Three days hence "The devils to which the poor woman sacrificeth will dash her in pieces."  
And Job did as Rabban had commanded him on the First Day of the week,  
1445 And he stood on the ashes in penitence, before all the people of his village.

And in the evening of the Second Day of the Week,  
 the devils rent the woman,  
 And she was strangled by them, and the matter of  
 her became known to every man.

## SECTION XXXIX.

And Emmanuel the deacon, the believing man of fair  
 appearance,

Who was from Bêth Ghûrbâk, a village mighty in  
 the Lord,

1450 Had a brother who was many years older than he,  
 And he had a wife who was lascivious, lustful, and  
 adulterous :

[Page 175] Whenever that woman saw Emmanuel's  
 chastity

Which was adorned with holiness, in the fair ap-  
 pearance of his person,

The vile creature would struggle to bring the chaste  
 man to love her,

1455 And <sup>1</sup> to unite with her in love, even as the lascivious Fol. 51 b woman<sup>1</sup> wished [to bring] Joseph.

Meanwhile Emmanuel himself, in purity and upright-  
 ness,

Was living with his wife in the love of Christ our  
 Lord.

But the vile woman was scheming with all kinds of  
 craftiness

How she might overthrow the chaste man and make  
 him defile his brother's bed.

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, Potiphar's wife.

1460 Sometimes she would laugh in his face, and grasp him with love,  
At other times she would seize his hands, and squeeze and press them with fervour,  
That, peradventure, that which she desired she might bring upon him, and he would have intercourse with her forthwith ;  
But he never had it in his mind to do her abominable will.  
And when she saw that he came not to her desire, and that he did not unbend to her incitements,  
1465 That she might speak to him freely, and disgrace his chastity,  
She took refuge in devils, and in the sorcerers who served them,  
And she asked them to bring Emmanuel to her couch ;  
Then the sorcerers gave her oil which she was to give him to anoint his body,  
Fol. 52 a And the adulterous woman, having done as | the sorcerers had commanded her,  
1470 Straightway there was raised up a storm against the ship of the soul of the deacon,  
And the fire of love for her spread in him, like the fire of a blazing furnace.  
For two or three days the man of endurance restrained himself,  
And he went not to his house through the greatness of [his] sin, and he wished to die.  
Finally he went to Rabban, and revealed unto him his matter,  
1475 And, shedding tears before the old man, he entreated to have rest from his evil imagination.

And Rabban at once anointed him with prayer oil of health,

[Page 176] And commanded him to observe the times [of prayer] in the temple the whole Sabbath.

Then having come he made known to Rabban, [saying], “Our Lord hath visited me most fully.”

And he remained in the monastery, and became a disciple and a chosen vessel.

1480 And he took an oath, saying, “From the time when the old man laid his right hand upon my head unto this day

“The lust which is of the world hath never put me to shame.”

#### SECTION XL.

And again, one of our brethren, whose name was Gâws-Îshô<sup>1</sup>, and

Who was known to be from Bêth | Âsâ,<sup>2</sup> a famous Fol. 52 b village of Gûghma<sup>1</sup>,

Had a father who had married a wife after [the death of] the mother of Gâws-Îshô<sup>1</sup>,

1485 And after Gâws-Îshô<sup>1</sup> had become a monk she gave birth to a son.

It also happened that his father departed from this world of trouble,

And his father's wife was afraid that he would divide with her son the inheritance.

Then she meditated and made a poison, and [put it] in one of the things which he ate,

<sup>1</sup> I. e., the “refuge of Jesus”.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the place where Bâbhai established a school; see *Book of Governors*, vol. II. p. 275.

That she might kill the chosen man Gâws-Îshô‘; and she took it and brought it to the monastery.

1490 And the holy man Rabban, who could see the things which were hidden as well as those which were manifest,

Called Gâws-Îshô‘, and said unto him, “Take thy father’s wife and come here.”

And having come he answered and said unto her, “What hast thou brought for Gâws-Îshô‘?”

She saith unto him, “Behold, I have brought him some food made of lentils.”

Then the old man said unto her, “Woe unto thee, O miserable woman,

1495 “Hast thou no shame before man, and no fear of the Lord?

“The holy man Gâws-Îshô‘, who was demanding nothing of thee,

“Thou hast contrived a plan to kill him by poison ;  
Fol. 53 a rise up, and get thee | gone to thy house with thy gifts.”

[Page 177] Then she turned away from her wish, and vowed fair things of every kind,

And she made supplication unto God with tears, that He would forgive her sins.

#### SECTION XLI.

1500 And again, a certain man from Harbath Sënônîthâ had a wife, and to

Him, through the agency of devils working by means of the sorcerers who ministered unto them,

There appeared in the night time sleeping by him a female dog ;

And when she woke up that vision went away and turned into a woman.

And her husband seeing her constantly thus became terrified thereat,

1505 Not knowing of a certainty how to inform her of how he saw her.

Now the woman herself was not aware of the change which came over her,

Only her husband saw [it], and he held his peace and disregarded the matter.

For he thought that his miserable wife was a witch, And he was afraid if she learned that he was watching her that she would destroy him forthwith by means of her enchantments.

1510 And he decided to come and pray in this holy monastery,

And then to depart into | remote countries and be <sup>Fol. 53 b</sup> free from her.

And having come and prayed in the temple, the holy man sent for him,

And having come to him, he said unto him, "Whence art thou, O believer ?

He saith unto him, "I am from Harbath Sēnōnīthā."

1515 Rabban saith, "Whither dost thou wish to go and leave thy house and thy children ?"

And the believing man, seeing that he knew of his departure before he had told him,

Made his whole business clear before our holy father.

And the old man answered and said unto him, "This vexing cometh to thy wife

"Through the wicked devils who are seeking to bring her to their will.

1520 "[Page 178] This thing hath befallen her by the permission of God, the Lord of all,  
 'Because she hath not observed Friday, and hath partaken of food of flesh,  
 "Although our religion commandeth that none of the believing and chosen folk  
 "Shall pollute his holy soul with meat on the day of Friday.  
 "But rise up now, O my son, return in thy house in the peace of our Lord.

1525 "Behold, give her this martyrs' dust to take, and let her have refuge in Jesus Christ.  
 "And admonish thy wife very carefully that she cease |  
 Fol. 54 a from her former works ;  
 "And when she hath done thus that phantom will never more appear unto thee."  
 And thus by the prayer of Rabban was done away that wicked deceit  
 Of the impudent Devil from those wretched folk.

## SECTION XLII.

1530 And a certain woman of Bêth Rastâk carried her son in faith  
 To the cell of our old man, Rabban Bar-'Idtâ, the physician.  
 And his two feet (*or, legs*) being maimed, whenever the young man stood up  
 His legs became twisted beneath him, and he walked on one side of his foot.  
 And the blessed man took a horn of holy oil and anointed him,

1535 And the youth remained [there] two days, and was made whole, and his mother took him away.

## SECTION XLIII.

Again, a certain man from Bâbhëthâ betrothed a woman to his son in the usual manner, And the day of the marriage feast having drawn nigh, he went to the holy man And persuaded our Rabban to pray over them in love.

The blessed old man saith unto him, "Hearken | unto <sup>Fol. 54 b</sup> what I shall say unto you.

1540 "Take heed when ye go to the Euphrates to fetch the bride for thy son

"[Page 179] That no destroying singers go with you on your road.

"But gather together with gladness the priests and pious Levites,

"And go and come [back] singing the service of the Church, and Christ will be with you."

Besides this Rabban informed him of no other thing whatsoever,

1545 And the believing man undertook to do according to the command of Christ.

Now when he had gone [home] his brethren and kinsfolk would not hearken unto him, saying,

"We will not spoil our gladness, and according to our custom it shall be performed."

And having arrived half-way on their road,

Straightway a vision of the devil appeared unto the bride,

1550 And she cast away her apparel, and let down the plaits of her hair.

And straightway her brethren and relations took her and lifted her down from the ass.

And the poor woman having become ill and rent by the devils,

Her brethren took her carefully back to their house in sorrow.

Fol. 55 a And the believing man ran to Rabban, | and informed him of the matter with tears,

1555 Then Rabban blamed him, and said unto him, "Why didst thou not keep the command?

"It was a company of wicked devils, our enemies, which met you,

"And at the sound of the singers they passed by you and went to Bêth Nûrâ<sup>1</sup> of Media.

"My sons, had ye been singing the Psalms as I commanded you,

"They would neither have had power over you nor approached your bride.

1560 "As soon as the devils saw you their will was accomplished in something,

"For they straightway destroyed your joy, and changed it into sorrow."

And he gave him some martyrs' dust, saying, "In the evening take with thee

"The priests of the Holy Church, and the deacons, and the Levites,

"And both in going and in coming let them sing the Psalms of the Holy Spirit;

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps Bêth Nûrâ, literally "house of fire", here only means a fire temple, and is not to be understood as a proper name.

1565 "Fear nothing whatsoever, and the Lord in His mercy will protect you."

[Page 180] And having done according to the word of the old man Rabban Bar-'Idtâ the Great, They performed their custom in gladness, and brought their bride in peace.

#### SECTION XLIV.

Again, they brought unto him a certain woman of the village of Bar-|Shîrâ,

Fol. 55 b

Who was vexed by an affliction [caused] by the cruelty of an evil devil.

1570 And Rabban prayed over her before God, and anointed her with holy oil,

And the devil was driven out of her, and she returned to her house in joy.

#### SECTION XLV.

Again, there was in the village of Bêth Daniel, which is in Margâ,

A certain man whose name was Denhâ, a prince who was exceedingly rich.

He had so many sheep that it was difficult, nay, impossible to number them,

1575 And there fell [upon them] a violent sickness, and his flocks began to die.

Then he ran in faith to this holy man,

And entreated him that he would stay the pestilence among them by his prayer,

The old man answered, and said unto him, "Dost thou wish thy flocks of

“Sheep to be saved from death?” Denhâ saith unto him, “Yea, my lord.”

1580 The blessed old man saith unto Denhâ, the upright believer,

“Thou hast a certain maidservant; cast her forth quickly from thy house.”

And he sware unto him, [saying], “This day no maid-servant dwelleth in my dominion.”

Fol. 56 a For his acquaintances were saying | that one of his sons had committed folly with her.

And Rabban gave him water in which he had placed oil and the dust of martyrs,

1585 And Denhâ sprinkled it upon his flocks, and the pestilence was stayed among them.

[Page 181]

#### SECTION XLVI.

Again, to the believing man Yazdîn, from the famous [village of] Tell el-Hâtê<sup>1</sup>

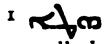
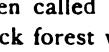
Every son that was born died before forty days [were passed];

And the two of them, he and his wife, came to Rabban weeping, [and saying],

“Since it happeneth unto us thus, death is better for us than life.”

1590 And the holy man consoled them both, and said unto them,

“I will entreat the God of all to keep alive one son for you;”

<sup>1</sup>  or  means “branches”, and the village may have been called the “Hill of Branches” because of a hill covered by a thick forest which stood upon it.

And he gave them some martyrs' dust and blessing,  
and a son came to them, and he lived.

It was he who became their heir, even as this old  
man had told them.

### SECTION XLVII.

Again, in the village of Bêth 'Arbâthâ, which is below  
our monastery,

1595 There was a certain old woman who was a widow,  
and she was poor and needy,

And she had an only son, who tended the cattle of  
the village. |

Now there was in that village a rich man who had <sup>Fol. 56 b</sup>  
a daughter that was a virgin,

But she had been seduced by a certain pagan and  
unbeliever.

When she was asked by her father, who had done  
this thing unto her,

1600 She answered him with a lie and false accusation,  
[saying],

“The young man, the son of such and such a woman,  
hath done this shameful thing unto me.”

And he believed the words of his daughter, and sent  
his sons and they brought the young man.

And he beat him cruelly and mercilessly, and cut his  
flesh into pieces,

And drove out his mother from the village, and the  
old woman came to Rabban,

605 [Page 182] And complained and cried before him about  
the act of oppression which had been done unto  
them.

And Rabban sent to the man to come to him—and he would not—

That he might rebuke him for the folly which had been done by him in violent anger,

And he comforted the old woman, and said unto her, “In a little time the lie will be revealed,

“And your enemies shall be condemned, and ye shall be [proved] innocent.”

1610 And the young woman having brought forth a male child, they sent it to the old woman,

Fol. 57 <sup>a</sup> Saying, | “Rear thy son’s son, as is right and proper.” Then the old woman came to Rabban, in tears and affliction,

And he said unto her, “Hold thy peace, old woman, thy son shall inherit all their house.”

After a few days God put all of them to death,

1615 Except their daughter, who had been bound in love for the son of the old woman,

From the time when she had made the accusation against him, [and she wished them] to give her to him;

And she sent for him, and he came to her, and took her to wife and became their heir.

#### SECTION XLVIII.

Again, one of our brethren by reason of his ascetic life

Had fallen into a very grievous sickness, and he had brought low his body by his austere practices,

1620 And he sent for Rabban to come and pray over him that his body might be healed,

And the holy old man came, and holding his staff  
in his hand,  
Said unto him, "Ephraim, Ephraim, Christ our Lord  
healeth thee ;"  
And straightway the brother was healed, and all who  
heard glorified the Lord. |

[Page 183]

## SECTION XLIX.

Again, a certain bald man, from the village of Bêth Fol. 57 b  
Ḳadshâyê,

1625 Which is in Margâ, had a bull, a very great bull,  
And being among the herd, and the herdsman asleep,  
certain men passed by, and took him away, and  
departed ;

And his owners hearing this went out everywhere,  
and sought him but could not find him.

Now the miracles of the blessed man being proclaimed  
by the mouth[s] of all men,  
The friends and relatives of the owner of the bull  
counselled him to come to Rabban,

1630 And he rose up and came to him. And Rabban hearing  
said unto him,

"Swear unto me by God's Name that thou wilt not  
expose the thief ;

"That the power may fall into my hands, and he  
suffer not the loss of his soul and his money."

And he swore by the Living God, [saying], "I will  
not expose the thief."

The blessed old man saith unto him, "Behold, thy  
bull is hidden in the house

1635 "Of the thief Layôlôkh, who is from the village of  
Bêth Zâkhô,

“And they are now ready to carry him and sell him in Bêth ‘Edhrai;

Fol. 58 a “But go quickly, and demand him | from him secretly, “And, behold, by reason of his fear he will take thee into his house;

“Take thy bull, and come [hither] secretly in the late night.”

1640 And the man, having done thus, according to the word of the honourable old man,

Took his bull, and departed to his house in joy, and praised his Creator.

#### SECTION L.

And [there was] also a certain young deacon, with a sweet voice, and fine appearance,

Tall in stature, and intelligent of face, from the village of ‘In-Barkê,’

[Page 184] Him did Satan one day smite in the temple,

1645 And he beat him with violent blows, and buffeted him, and entreated him evilly,

And without mercy he made him to be like unto a dead man in whom there is no feeling;

And his parents took him up, and brought him to this holy old man.

And Rabban, having gone forth and seen him in this evil case,

According to his custom, anointed him with the oil of prayer, and prayed over him.

<sup>1</sup> See Thomas of Margâ, Bk. I. Chap. 31 (*Book of Governors*, vol. II. p. 103).

1650 And the devil began to say unto the old man, "Have no anxiety about him,  
 "And cast me not forth from him, | for thus is it Fol. 58 b permitted to be to him,  
 "For whilst he was burning incense in the censer in the apse by the altar,  
 "He was gazing lasciviously and lustfully at the women in the temple."

The old man saith unto the devil, "Come forth from him by the word of Christ

1655 "Which overthroweth your wiles, and thou shalt not in any way whatsoever harm him."

And at the holy man's word the devil went out from that young man,  
 And Rabban commanded him neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine for a year.

Then Satan went into the cell of Rabban, the old man of the East,  
 And took his ink and poured it out upon the quire of paper upon which he was writing.

1660 And the Evil One broke the little stool upon which he used to sit,  
 And the pitcher of water, which our Rabban used to keep in the yard,  
 The Evil One threw under a rock, and then he departed thence.

And going into his house Rabban marvelled at the wickedness of the devil[s],  
 And how, even in small matters, they wished to do harm unto men.

1665 And he said, "O Christ, our Lord, Thou art the strength of Thy servants who believe on Thee. |

[Page 185]

## SECTION LI.

Fol. 59 a There was a certain widow who lived in the village of Béth Marûth,  
 And she had a fair and beautiful daughter who was a virgin ;  
 And a certain Magian, a nobleman of the city of Adiabene, who had heard  
 Of her fair beauty, wished to come and carry her away by force ;  
 1670 And her mother, having learned [this], ran to the refuge of Rabban's prayers.  
 And hearing [this] the old man said unto her, "Weep not, O blessed old woman,  
 "For he who bindeth laws is not like unto him who looseth them ;"  
 And he gave her some of the dust of the martyrs, and said unto her, "Depart, O old woman, to thy house,  
 "And seven days from this time thy deliverance will make itself known."  
 1675 And when the limit of the days which our Rabbâ had marked out had been passed,  
 Certain men came from the Monastery of Geshrâ, and told the old woman,  
 [Saying,] "That Magian having come to the bridge to pass over to you  
 "Suddenly fell in the Great Zâbh, and he and his horse were drowned together."  
 Fol. 59 b And hearing her report | every man ascribed praise unto God.

## SECTION LII.

1680 Again, a certain believing man from the village of  
Guptâ once

Took some wine, and came to do a kindness unto  
the brethren who were in the monastery.

And having set down the wine skins in the monastery,  
and shut the door,

One of the skins burst, and all the wine that was in  
it ran out.

And the potter having come [there] by night for  
some purpose

1685 Saw that the wine of [one] skin was lost, and ran  
and told the old man secretly,

Saying, "What shall we do, Father? For this believer  
is a poor man.

"[Page 186] He brought the wine and it has been  
spilled, and if he knoweth [of it] he will buy  
[other wine] in its place."

And the old man Rabbâ said unto him, "Go, fill that  
skin with water,

"And throw this dust of the martyrs in it, and let it  
[stand] till the morning;

1690 "And come, O my beloved, when the day hath  
dawned, that I may tell thee what to do."

That brother, having gone and done secretly what  
Rabban commanded him,

Came in the morning to him and shewed him that  
he had done according to his word.

The old man answered and said unto him, "Depart, |  
my son, in the peace of Christ.

Fol. 60 a

“By the prayer of the holy old men who are in our poor congregation,

1695 “That water shall become unto them good and pleasant wine ;

“But, by the Word of Christ our Lord, reveal not this to any man

“Until I depart from the body unto the place where God pleaseth.”

And after the death of Rabban that excellent brother proclaimed

This glorious miracle which Christ had wrought by Rabban.

#### SECTION LIII.

1700 At the time when Zakkâi was pouring forth on every man a bribe

Through the infidel Gabriel, that he might increase the seed of his blasphemy,

He led captive by his wicked error the village of Ḥarbath Nespâ of Ardôd.

And Rabban Bar-'Idtâ sent unto those people, saying, “Because ye have given up the truth, and have grasped the error of Zakkâi,

1705 “God will send upon you this year three punishments : “Hail, drought, and mildew, for the avenging of your works ;”

And hearing [this] some of them mocked, and some of them said, “[These words] are true.”

Fol. 60 b And at the end of the aforementioned winter, on Saturday, the tenth day of the month Nîsân, God rained upon them a cloud of hail from heaven.

1710 [Page 187] And within it was a burning fire, and it laid waste all their fields,  
And after it there was a great drought, and it destroyed what was left,  
And then the fire of the Lord went forth all round about the wicked men,  
And it wasted and destroyed all the green grass and herbs of their fields.  
Thus that which the holy old man had seen concerning them was fulfilled,  
1715 And finally, through their rebellious nature, the infidels were put to shame.

## SECTION LIV.

A certain man from the village of Bêth Zâbhâyê,  
which is blessed  
And praiseworthy, and is situated in the country of Nineveh, told us,  
Saying, "At the coming of the sorcerer  
"Zakkâi, the servant of Satan, the deceiver of the simple,  
1720 "When he sent ambassadors unto us with a bribe,  
and we drove them away,  
"And we were afraid of the compulsion of Gabriel,  
the physician of Chosroës,  
"Lest he meditated our submission at the gate of the Persian king,  
"For he was uttering lies against us to bring us under the yoke of his evil error, |  
"Straightway, on that very day, we sent an elder of Fol. 61 a our Church,

1725 "Unto our father, Rabban Bar-'Idtâ, the advocate of Christ,  
 "Saying, We beseech thee, Master, to pray for us,  
 "That we may be saved from this storm which is raised up against the Church.  
 "And the holy man sent unto us a cross from his cell  
 "That it might be set up in our holy and believing church of Bêth Zâbhâyê.  
 1730 "And he sent unto us by the elder [a message],  
 saying, Error shall have  
 "Never the power to come in to you all the days of the world.  
 "And having gained consolation from the message of Rabban, we  
 "[Page 188] Placed our confidence in his prayer, and we suffered no harm.  
 "And thus Christ saved us from Zakkâi and from Gabriel,  
 1735 "And behold, we placed the cross in our church which He preserved by His power for our village."

#### SECTION LV.

And a certain monk of this our congregation,  
 Whose name was Yâwnâن, who came from the blessed village of Karmelîsh,  
 Went one day to see his parents according to this world,  
 Fol. 61 b And having returned from | the village of Karmelîsh,  
 and arrived at the river Hâzâr,  
 1740 A fierce lion met him, and prevented him from crossing to the other side,

And having looked hither and thither, and there being no man [to help him], and behold, the lion was coming over towards him,

The hope of saving his life was cut off from him through the fear which had fallen upon him.

“And”, said he, “I cried out in my mind to the God of all, and I said,

“O Lord, Thou Living God, if by the prayer of the holy man,

1745 “Rabban Bar-‘Idtâ, I be delivered from this wild beast, “I will never again in all my life go forth from my cell or from the monastery into any [other] place.”

And that brother took an oath, saying, “Immediately the lion had been adjured by me,

“That mighty lion was restrained by the prayer of Rabban Bar-‘Idtâ,

“And he at once left me and departed, and I never saw him again, and I regained my strength.

1750 “And having arrived and come to the monastery, before I entered my cell,

“I went to the blessed man, and prayed, and was blessed by him,

“And he answered and said unto me, O my son Yâwnân, how wast thou saved and delivered

“From the lion which met thee on the bank of the river Hazâr?

“For behold, it seemed as if thou wert | standing before me in fear, Fol. 62 a

1755 “And as if thou wert praying to God to deliver thee from the lion.

“[Page 189] My son Yâwnân, thou servant of Jesus, this hath happened for thy benefit,

“Because thy going to the house of thy parents was not beneficial for thy life.

“Thou hast done well in making a covenant with Christ, the Lord of all,

“Never to do again the like of this, and never to go again to thy kinsfolk.”

#### SECTION LVI.

1760 And our father had the custom of sitting in silent contemplation in [his] cell

During certain special weeks, wherein he never went out into the temple,

I mean, the weeks of our Lord's fast, and of the fast of the Apostles,

And the week of Mâr Elijah, and also the week of Mâr Moses,

And thus the holy man did for a period of about twenty years,

1765 And without absolute necessity he never opened his door to any man.

Now there was a little opening in the outside of the cell of the blessed man,

Through which he put his pure hand, and from the inside, set therein some dust of the martyrs.

This opening was made in [his] yard, on the western side,

Fol. 62 b And the cross was fixed above it, | even as we have said above.

1770 And he used to say, “Let every man who hath need, or who is afflicted in any way,

“Take of the holy dust of the martyrs”, which he had blessed and placed in the opening.

"And I", said the old man, "behold, I will pray as is most right,

"And our Lord, in His might, will give unto him that hath need, that which is best for him."

Every sick or afflicted man who came to that opening,

1775 And who took, in faith, some of the martyrs' dust which the old man had placed there,

Straightway whatever pain or sickness which the believing man had

Was driven out from him by the Lord, through the prayers of the holy man.

And that holy brother, who used to work the mill

[Page 190] Which we had in the monastery, related to me the following :—

1780 "One day the mule which used to work the mill fell ill,

"And was about to die immediately; and we were greatly troubled because we had no other [animal].

"And he remained ill for two days, during which the camel did the work in his stead."

"And", said he, "I went and bowed down before the cross which Rabban had set up,

"And I took [some of] the martyrs' dust from the <sup>Fol. 63 a</sup> window, and some water from the well

1785 "Of the holy and strenuous old man, Rabban Bar-'Idtâ,

"And I went and rubbed the whole of the mule's body and his head with them,

"Crying out meanwhile to Christ by the prayer of our holy father."

And that brother swore, saying, "As soon as I had done this,

"The mule had relief, and he stood up upon his legs,....

1790 "And he at once drew nigh unto the manger and betook himself to eating and drinking ;  
 "And when the day had come, and all men knew about it, they gave thanks unto God, and glorified Him."

### SECTION LVII.

And again a certain young man of the brethren, who had recently gone forth into a cell,  
 Sometimes sadly, and sometimes gladly and smilingly, told us the following :—  
 "Once there was stirred up within me the deadly lust for women."  
 1795 And neither by night nor by day did it ever leave him, even for a little space,  
 But he was always burning, as it were, with a deadly fire ;  
 "In this wise was lust blazing in my heart both by day and by night.  
 "I practised constant fasting, and kept vigil, and abstained from water,  
 "I used no oil whatsoever, and I took no repose. |  
 1800 "And I decided to go quickly to the opening, and  
 Fol. 63 b to ask for prayer,  
 "[Page 191] And, said he, I went, and I fell down weeping in prayer to God.  
 "And I made supplication by the prayer of Rabban that our Lord would visit me with grace,  
 "And would not let me slip from [His] hand, and that [my] passions might not make a mock of me.  
 "And I felt as if power went forth from Rabban

1805 "And entered into my members, and drove out my passion and the misery of my disturbed mind.  
 "Then after these things I lived in rest, and peace, and tranquillity,  
 "The which I am not able to describe with the tongue of flesh."

## SECTION LVIII.

There is a cruel and painful sickness which is called "gout",

Which maketh a man's whole body weak, and pierceth every member,

1810 And he lieth in tortures and agonies of pain as if he had been stricken for a long time,  
 And he is unable to move for any thing whatsoever.  
 Upon our brother, whose name was David, and who was from the great village of Bābhēthā—

Now he was the son of honourable and famous folk —this disease fell for some days, |

And although the parents of this brother employed Fol. 64 a physicians,

1815 And they brought him medicines of every kind, his sickness continued to wax strong.

Now the brother himself rejected everything, and took refuge in Rabban's prayer,

And one night he spake unto us in this wise:—

Now he had a natural brother who was younger than he,

And he said unto him, "Rise up, my brother, take hold of my hands that I may stand upon my feet,

<sup>1</sup>  = ποδῶν.

1820 "And hold me on one side, and on the other I will take hold of my staff.

"And let us go, by the might of our Lord, to Rabban's cell.

"Perhaps through the God of the worlds I shall be worthy of death or life,

"Or perhaps God will work for me deliverance by the prayer of Rabban."

[Page 192] And he asserted with oaths, and spake unto us thus:—

1825 "When I had drawn nigh to the window, and had knelt and worshipped before the cross,

"And had fallen upon my face and had slumbered, sleep came upon me and I slept.

"And I was kneeling upon the ground like a man half asleep and half awake,

"And behold, a dove went forth suddenly from the cell of the holy man,

"And she alighted upon me, and hovered about on all sides of me with outspread wings, |

1830 "And the sickness flew away from me in the form of  
Fol. 64 b loathsome flies,

"And departed to a great distance by the might of our Lord, and by the prayer of Rabban.

"Then I awoke, and cried unto my brother, and I said with joy, 'Hail, cross !'

"And he said to me, 'Behold, here am I, my brother'; and I said unto him, 'O my beloved,

"Didst thou see the beautiful dove standing above my head ?'

1835 "He said to me, 'No, my brother David, by God I saw nothing.'

"I said unto him, 'Rise up, O my brother, for God hath given me healing.'"

And he rose up, and came to his cell, leaping like a stag,

And he had need neither of the support of the staff, nor of the holding of the hand.

And all who heard glorified God, and praised Rabban Bar-'Idtâ.

#### SECTION LIX.

1840 O how many instances of help arose from the martyrs' dust which people took from him!

O how many sicknesses were driven away from men by his prayers!

And even the waters which were taken from the fountain which was near him,

When sprinkled about or used to make a sign, kept away death from the flock. |

#### SECTION LX.

[Page 193] Before the departure of Rabban there went Fol. 65 a forth into this country of Margâ

1845 An evil night-wolf, according to what is said in Jeremiah.

And many young children, from their couches, That is to say, from their cradles, were snatched away and devoured.

Now this did not take place in one village [only], the wolf being found in another,

But from many villages in one night children were snatched away.

1850 As soon as deep sleep fell [upon men] he would come unawares and unperceived by them; And many passed the whole night without sleep [watching for him], And many crowds of people were gathered together and went round their houses with weapons. And when they saw that this evil had increased [and merited] punishment, The village[r]s gathered themselves together and came to the holy man, weeping 1855 For their children that had been eaten by the plague of night-wolves. And having received from Rabban some dust of martyrs, and water from his fountain of prayer, They sprinkled it on the boundaries of their villages, and the night-wolves were driven away. |

## SECTION LXI.

Fol. 65 b Again, in the village of Bêth Kûshtâ there were two brothers, One of them had a son and the other had a daughter. 1860 And their parents joined them together in marriage, according to the custom Which hath obtained among men from everlasting by the command of the Lord. Now for some reason, the sinfulness of which was hidden from them, Although it was revealed unto Rabban, some act of remissness was committed by them. Therefore whenever they went forth from their houses for [any] purpose,

1865 Or one of them was going back therein, that is to say, to his place,

[Page 194] A phantom appeared unto him, that is, a devil in the form of his companion.

If the young man was entering the house when the young woman was not therein,

There would suddenly appear unto him the form of his uncle's daughter,

As it were lying down and sleeping with him on a marriage bed.

1870 And her husband being terrified and in fear went forth thence quickly,

Crying out, "Oh, oh, what is this | wonderful thing?" Fol. 66 a

And if the young woman was going into her house when the young man was not therein,

Similarly he appeared unto her, and she would cry out and flee from her chamber.

Then their parents ran and came to the holy old man,

1875 And with tears related unto him all these things which had happened,

And he, like the skilful physician, who knoweth the illnesses of the sick,

Commanded the young folk to take good heed about one thing (*or, cause*);

But what that thing was he never revealed, and his disciples asked him not.

But he told them to hold themselves at a great distance from one thing only.

1880 And he gave them some of the holy martyrs' dust, and water to sprinkle in that house,

And thus, through God, that devilish appearance was done away.

## SECTION LXII.

Mâr Bar-'Idtâ became a disciple of Mâr Abraham the Great,<sup>1</sup>

When he was fully twenty and three years old,  
And he dwelt with the holy man thirty years, as it  
is written.

1885 From the time when he came here to Margâ he lived  
fifty years, in truth.

Fol. 66 b Behold, all the years which | our father the holy man  
lived amount to

One hundred years<sup>2</sup> in ascetic excellence, and three  
years in a state of perfection.

And being bowed by extreme old age, the end of  
his life drew nigh,

[Page 195] And he knew beforehand by the Holy  
Spirit, and the day of his end was shewn to him.

1890 On the day of our Lord's Epiphany, and of the Bap-  
tism of the Sanctifier of all,

As he was standing at the head of his sons, in prayer  
in the holy temple,

There his God revealed unto him, because he had  
loved Him and kept His Word,

That he should very soon be removed from this world  
to Paradise.

And as soon as the day had dawned, he called his  
beloved ones, and they came before him with joy,

<sup>1</sup> *I. a.*, the head of the Great Monastery on Mount Izlâ.

<sup>2</sup> We know from line 520 that he founded his monastery A. Gr. 873 = A. D. 562, and that he was at least 53 years old when he did so; he lived 50 years in Margâ, therefore he must have died about A. D. 612. If these figures be correct he was born A. D. 509.

1895 And he sat on the lowest step of the stairs leading to the altar, and then he spake unto them:—

## SECTION LXIII.

## Exhortations [of Bar-'Idtâ].

“My sons and my beloved, remain in the peace of Christ.

“Behold, the seal of my days hath come, and the end of the years of my life.”

And immediately his disciples were greatly moved, when they heard of his separation from them, And they all began to weep and to utter cries of woe mournfully.

1900 But he rejoiced and I was glad in the strenuousness Fol. 67 a of his glorious deeds,

And he glorified God Who had sustained and strengthened him all his days.

And he made his sons to cease from weeping, and said to them in admonition,

“My sons, keep that which I have taught you, and this also I command you,

“The orthodox faith of the truly orthodox men,

1905 “Who, after the Apostles, sent it into the country of the East.

“O sons, put not your confidence in a healthy belief,

“Unto which are not joined and bound the deeds of the freedom of the soul.

“For it is said in the Book of Life, and in the books of the Fathers,

“That faith without works is, in very truth, a dead thing.

1910 "For as man is composed of body and soul,  
 "And one of these without the other is not a perfect man,  
 "[Page 196] So indeed is it in this case; without good  
 and upright works  
 "Faith profiteth nothing, neither do works profit  
 without faith.  
 "For as in the healthy body his life cometh from  
 his soul,  
 1915 "And without that living soul the body cannot con-  
 tinue in health,  
 fol. 67 b "Thus also | the free soul is a living thing in the  
 faith of Christ,  
 "And if there be no faith therein it also is a dead  
 thing by itself.  
 "And love ye each other in love as Christ loved you  
 "And delivered His soul unto death for you all and  
 for your sakes.  
 1920 "And let there be manifest in you the discipleship  
 of His love, the guardian of His place,  
 "That ye may utter neither calumnies nor lies against  
 each other.  
 "And if any man among you shall be pre-eminent  
 in human frailty,  
 "And folly (*or, sin*) appear in him, correct him in  
 the love of Christ;  
 "And your armour against Satan shall be fasting and  
 prayer;  
 1925 "And every service of your life season ye with the  
 salt of humility.  
 "Be ye careful to read the Holy Scriptures continually,  
 "And be ye the cause of good to your souls, and  
 to the glory of the Name of your Lord,

"For it is written in the Gospel of Life, from the mouth of the Vivifier of all,

"Blessed is the servant through whom the Name of his Lord shall be glorified,

1930 "And Christ Jesus our Lord will crown their contendings |

"With the light of His living Cross and the glory of <sup>Fol. 68 a</sup> His happiness.

"And with the righteous, who have lived and shall live in all generations,

"At the Resurrection ye shall have happiness in the glory of the Lord;" and they all answered, Yea and Amen.

And as he was speaking with joy they were hearkening with weeping,

1935 And then they rose up for the Holy Mysteries, and he took some of the holy bread, and went to his cell.

#### SECTION LXIV.

##### [Page 197] The Death of our Father.

On the night of the eighth day of the month of the Latter Khânôn,<sup>1</sup>

His pious and holy soul winged its way to the treasuries of the kingdom.

And the coenobites, who had been commanded to watch him having come,

Informed his disciples concerning his departure from them.

<sup>1</sup> This month corresponds roughly with our January.

1940 Then they all were greatly moved, and gathered themselves together, and went in to their nurse, And governor, and leader, Mâr Bar-'Idtâ, their object of boasting.

Who would not weep to see Rabban Bar-'Idtâ who remained

In the corner of his chapel with his hands fastened upon his breast?

Fol. 68 b Who would not weep and sigh | to see him who had been glorious

1945 Lying prostrate in his chapel before God Who is to be praised?

Who would not string together lamentations for that person of excellence

On seeing him continuing in worship whilst his soul was in the chamber of joys?

Then they laid him down on the mat on which he used to sit and stand,

And they swathed him in funeral raiment, according to custom, and we brought his body along in honour.

1950 And the rumour of his death was carried into all the villages round about us,

And priests, and noblemen, and believing men, gathered together in crowds;

And we sang the funeral service over his honourable body for two days with great pomp,

And we laid him in a coffin made by a potter, and then buried him in the martyrium.

After the burial of our father we celebrated his honourable commemoration

1955 With a company of chosen priests and believing deacons.

And after four days the believers of Bêth Ghûrbâk heard

That Bar-‘Idtâ their Rabbâ was dead, and they were filled with great grief.

And they came here [having made] preparation to take his body to their village,

[Page 198] And there was a great tumult | in all the Fol. 69 a villages round about us.

1960 And the believing men were nigh unto murders and slaughter,

If they had not been pacified by means of the prayers of the holy man.

The sons of Bêth Ghûrbâk were crying out with a loud voice, and saying,

“We have ten parts in Rabban Bar-‘Idtâ and his monastery.

“Rabban Bar-‘Idtâ belongeth more to us than to any one else,

1965 “Because our holy Church is built in the name of the pious man.

“We have taken the greatest care for him and for the things which are his,

“And the monastery is ours;” and, [saying] other words of this kind, they became very violent,

But seeing and observing that the monks, his blessed sons,

And the believers were coming forward to pacify them, they relaxed their violence.

1970 Now the name of the head of the church who was with them was ‘Abhd-Îshô’,

A prudent and pacific man, and exceedingly rich in the fear of our Lord.

And he drew the Ninevites on one side, and said unto them,  
"O my sons, bring not upon your village a curse, instead of blessings,  
Fol. 69 b "But let us, like | believers, open the coffin of his holy body,  
1975 "And take therefrom a blessing, and then depart in peace."  
And they thought this [counsel] the better, and watched in prayer the night,  
And in the morning they did as they had said, and approached the pious body.  
The sons of Bêth Ghûrbâk the blessed took [one] of the fingers of the holy man as  
A blessing, and they wrapped [it] in scented byssus-cloths and fine silk,  
1980 And they laid it in a box which had been prepared, and departed to their village with joy ;  
And the people went out from the village, and received it with great honour.  
Concerning those benefits which flowed therefrom in Bêth Ghûrbâk,  
[Page 199] They themselves are the preachers of his wonderful works ;  
By the prayers of the holy man, the venerable Rabban Bar-'Idtâ,  
1985 May the inhabitants of that village be protected from all harm.  
And we all make supplication unto Christ, our Lord and our Hope,  
To shield at all times with the right hand of His Providence the monastery of our father.

And as God was with us during the life of our father,  
 So may He be among us after his departure from us,  
 1990 And with the pious priests and deacons, and the  
 believers of all ranks |

Who have celebrated the day of the commemoration <sup>Fol. 70 a</sup> of our holy and pious father.

May they be protected by the prayers of the blessed man Mâr Bar-'Idtâ

From all the afflictions of disturbed and troubled times.

O Christ, bless by the prayer of Thy chosen one Rabban Bar-'Idtâ

1995 This country and the inhabitants thereof, and all countries round about.

O Christ, bless by the prayer of Thy holy one Mâr Bar-'Idtâ

The crown of the year in which we now are, and let the year be an acceptable one.

O Christ, preserve by his prayer the priesthood and kingdom,

And let peace reign among us until the end of the world.

2000 O Christ, by his prayer establish the great Shepherd of the East;

Mâr . . . . .<sup>1</sup> the Patriarch, and lengthen the days of his sitting.

O Christ, by his prayer protect the Shepherd of Mâwsel, the well built [city],

Mâr . . . . .<sup>1</sup> the most pious, and make his life to revolve in peace.

O Christ, establish by his prayer the shepherds at the head of their flocks,

<sup>1</sup> Here the name is to be inserted.

2005 And visit them as Thou didst visit [the Israelites] by the hands of Moses and Aaron.

O Christ, preserve by his prayer this monastery and the dwellers therein, |

Fol. 70 b And let neither the Evil One nor plundering enemies have dominion over it.

[Page 200] O Christ, preserve by his prayer this village in which we sojourn ;

And multiply therein rest, and peace, and love, and mercy, and learning.

2010 O Christ, by his prayer bless the elders and deacons Who minister in his pure temple with the hymns of the Holy Spirit.

O Christ, preserve by his prayer him who voweth unto him a vow,

And let his vow be accepted as an acceptable thing with the mites of the widow.

O Christ, accept by his prayer the offering which shall be offered unto Thee,

2015 And let it be at Thy coming for the relief of thy believing servants who make offerings unto him.

O Christ, by his prayer bless the multitudes who have honoured his commemoration,

From evening until morning, and from morning until noon.

O Christ, support by his prayer the old men and old women ;

O Christ, strengthen by his prayer the young men and young women ;

2020 O Christ, preserve by his prayer the youths and maidens ;

O Christ, strengthen by his prayer believing men and women,

O Christ, heal by his prayer all such as are sick and diseased,

And grant unto them healing of the body and <sup>Fol. 71 a</sup> preservation of the soul with glory.

O Christ, pardon by his prayer the sins and offences of those who are dead,

<sup>2025</sup> And at the Resurrection make them worthy of the fair glory of Thy kingdom.

O Christ, adjure by his prayer the fiends and devils which possess men

That they may nevermore find occasion to vex Thy worshippers.

O Christ, grant by his prayers unto barren women beloved sons.

O Christ, grant by his prayers comfort unto all mourners.

<sup>2030</sup> O Christ, by his prayer make wars, and battles, and strifes to cease,

And make Thy peace to dwell in Thy Church unto the end of the world.

[Page 201] O Christ, remember by the prayer of Thy friend Rabban Bar-'Idtâ

Abraham who composed this discourse on him, and spare him in both worlds.

O Christ, have mercy upon Thy servant Abraham, and upon his parents,

<sup>2035</sup> Who by Thy power and help undertook to compose the discourse on Thy saint.

HERE ENDETH THIS HISTORY OF MÂR RABBAN BAR-'IDTÂ; TO GOD BE GLORY, AND WORSHIP, AND HONOUR, FOR EVER AND EVER!  
AMEN.

COLOPHONS :— 1. This book was finished and ended on the nineteenth day of the blessed month Âdhar, on the day of the Great Sabbath of the dawn of the night of the great First Day of the week of the Resurrection, in the year one thousand, eight hundred, and ninety-three of the birth of Christ our Lord. Glory be unto Him that maketh times and seasons to pass away, and Who Himself shall never, never pass away ! Yea and Amen.

2. It was written in the blessed village of Al-Ķôsh, the village of Nahum the Prophet, which is set and laid out by the side of the Monastery of Mâr Rabban Hôrmîzد the Persian ; may our Lord make it to dwell in His mighty right Hand ! Yea and Amen.

3. It was written in the days of the Father of Fathers, and the Chief of shepherds, who bindeth on crowns, who anointeth priests, who fasteneth on girdles, and bestoweth ecclesiastical dignities, Mâr Èliyâ the Thirteenth, the Catholicus and Patriarch of Babel of the East. May Christ establish his throne to the end of days through the prayer of the Apostles and Fathers, and may He extend his days and lengthen his years to the boasting of the Catholic Church ! Yea and Amen.

4. [This colophon is identical with No. 4 on page 108.]

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